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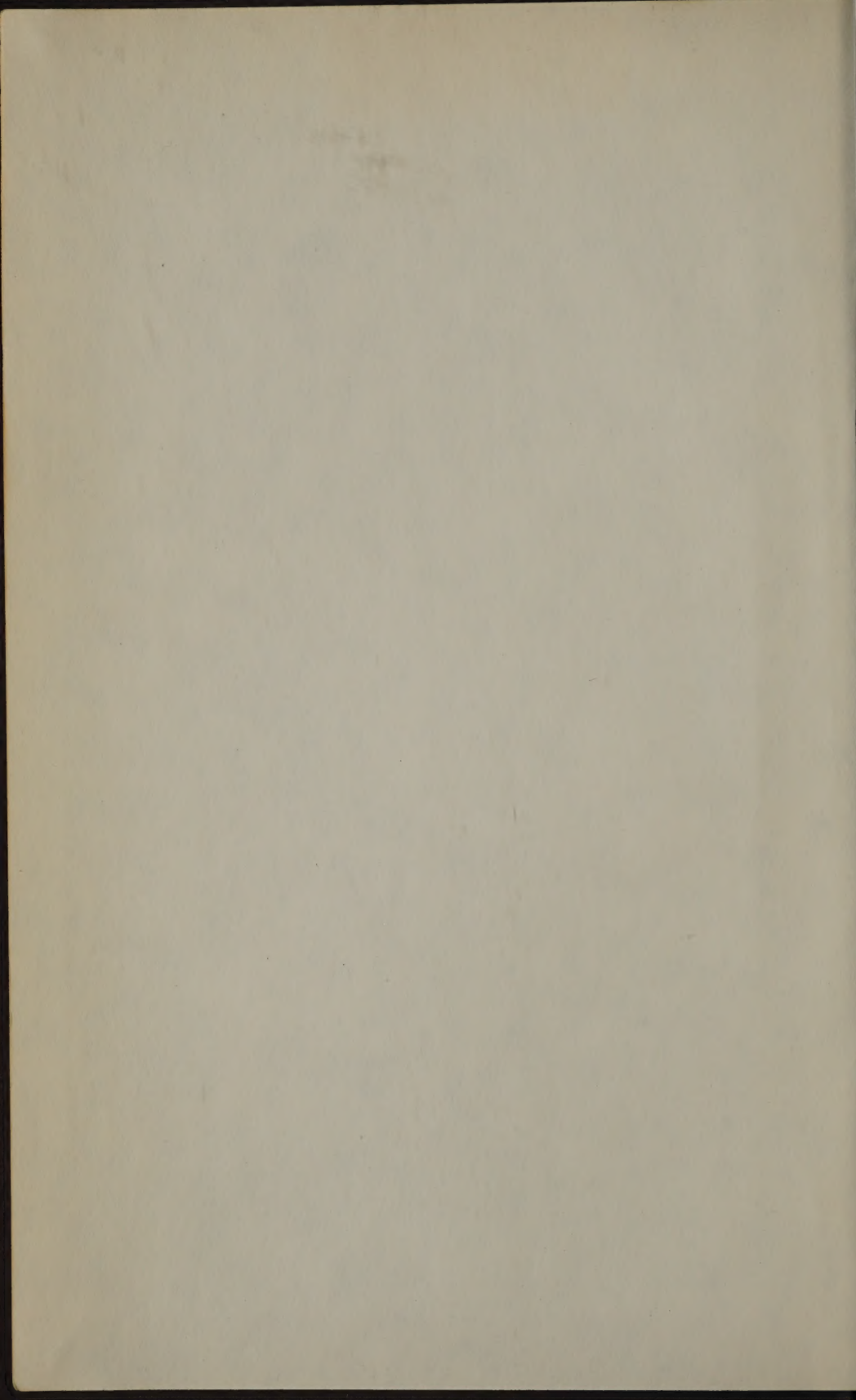
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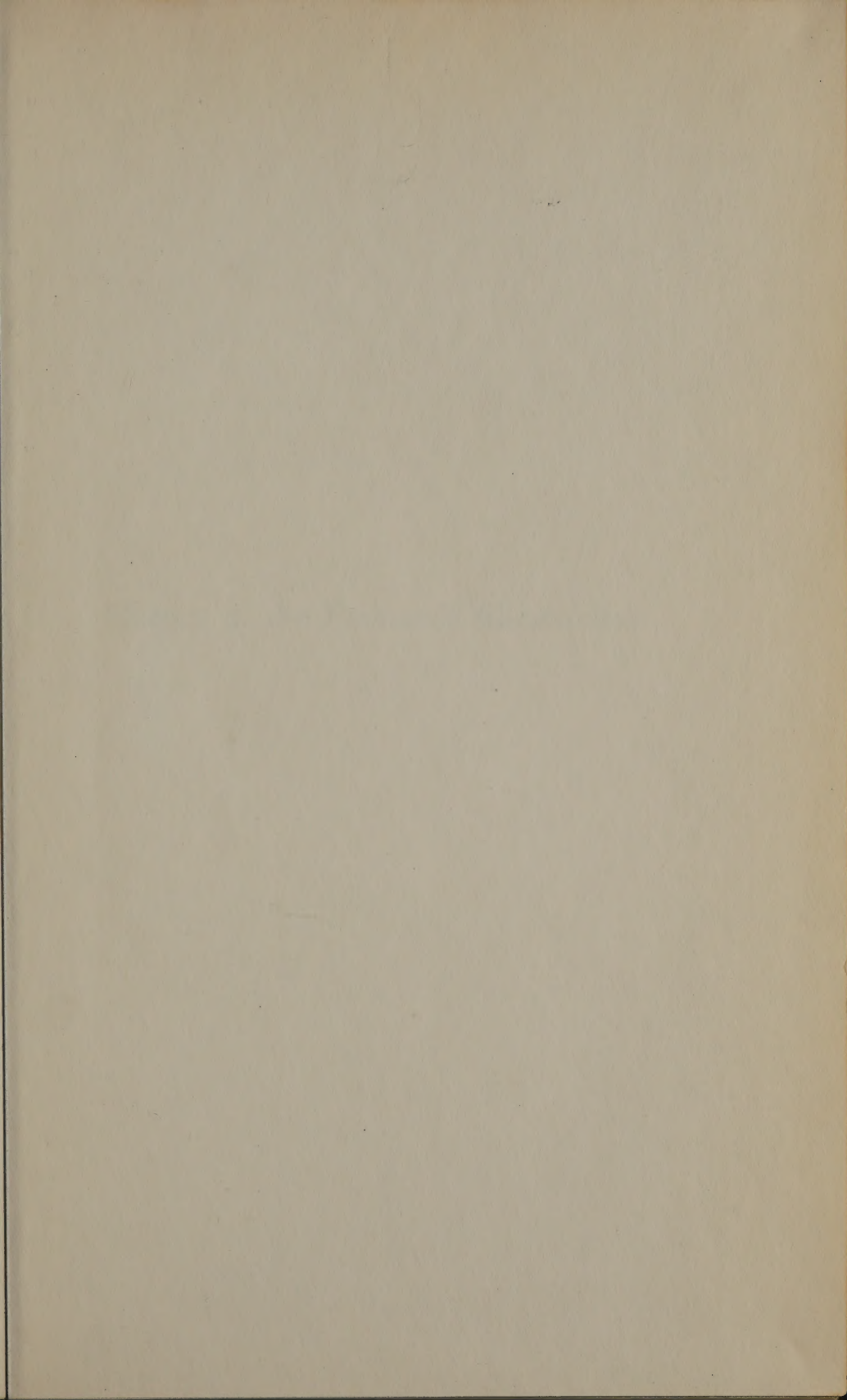
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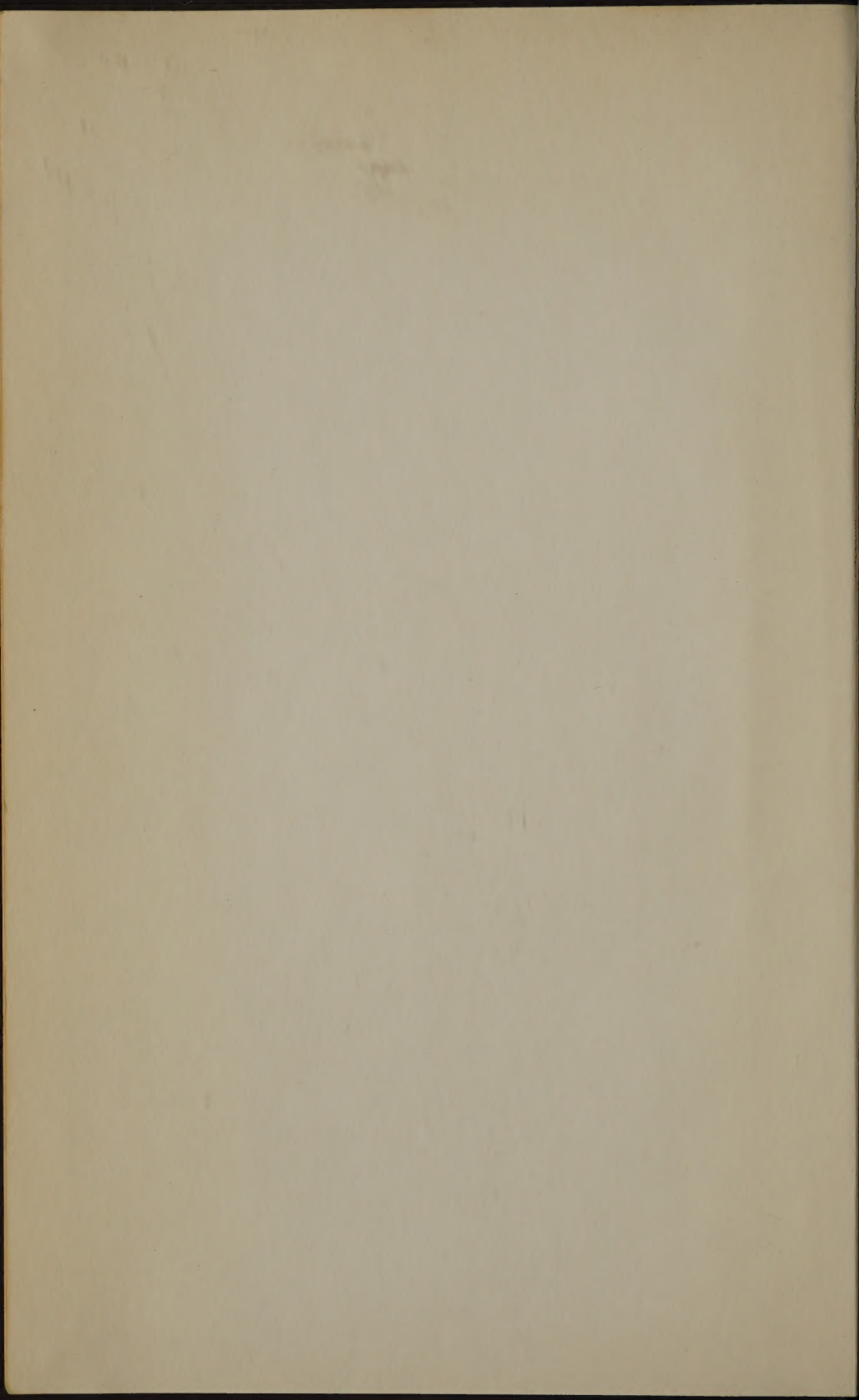
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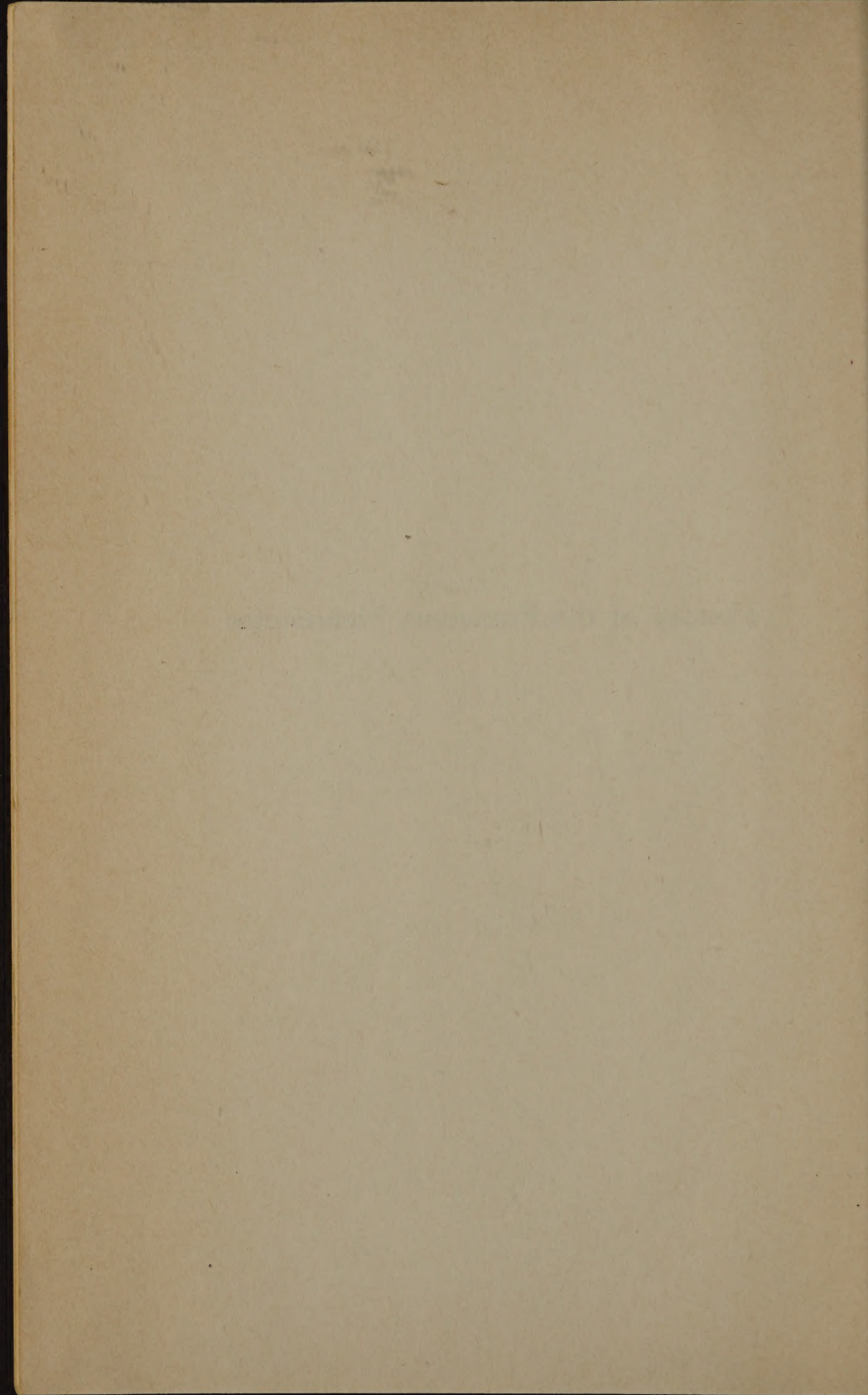
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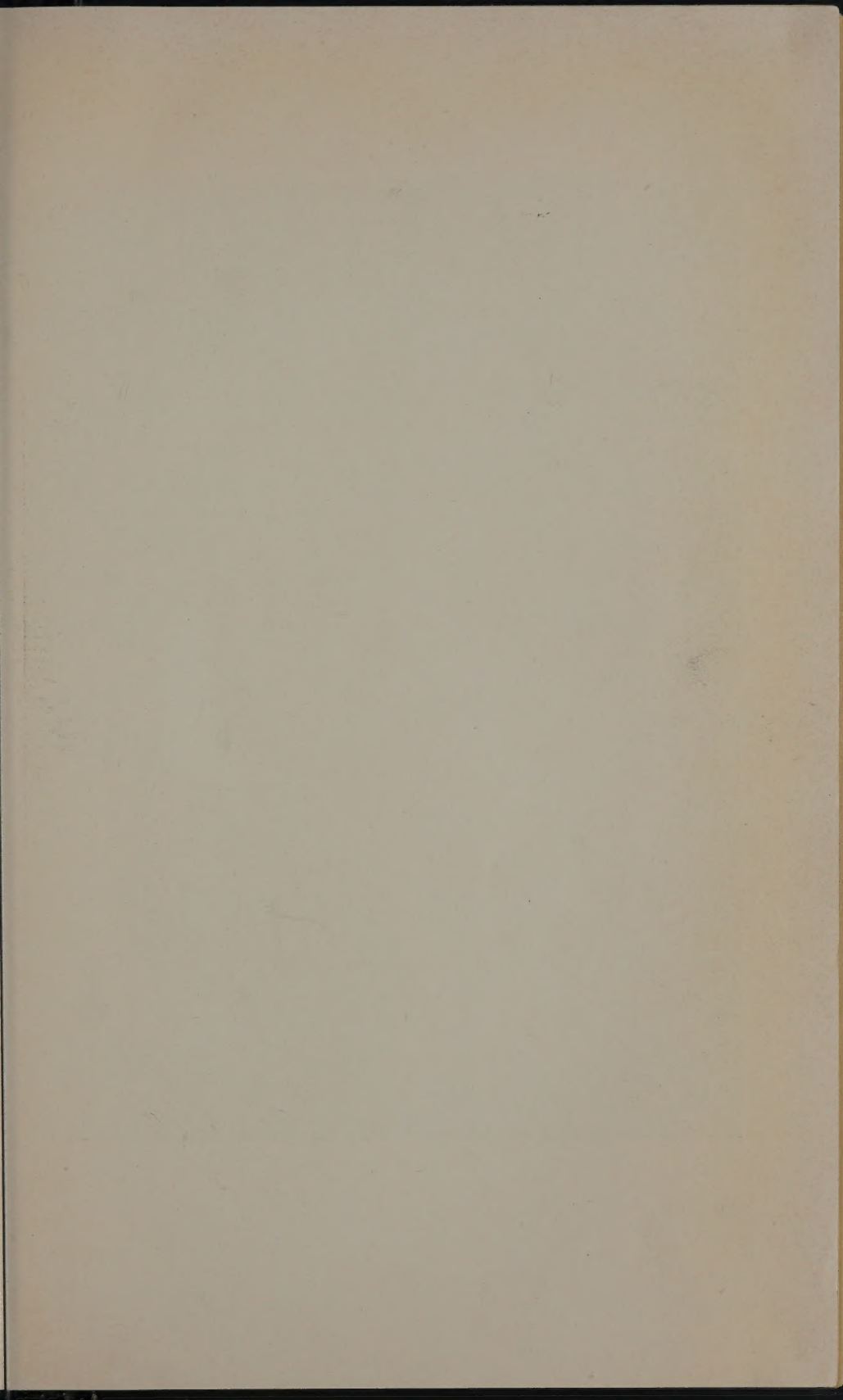






History of the Franconia Mennonites







DOYLESTOWN MEETINGHOUSE

Wm. W. H. Smith

d
History of the Mennonites

of the

Franconia Conference

By

JOHN C. WENGER

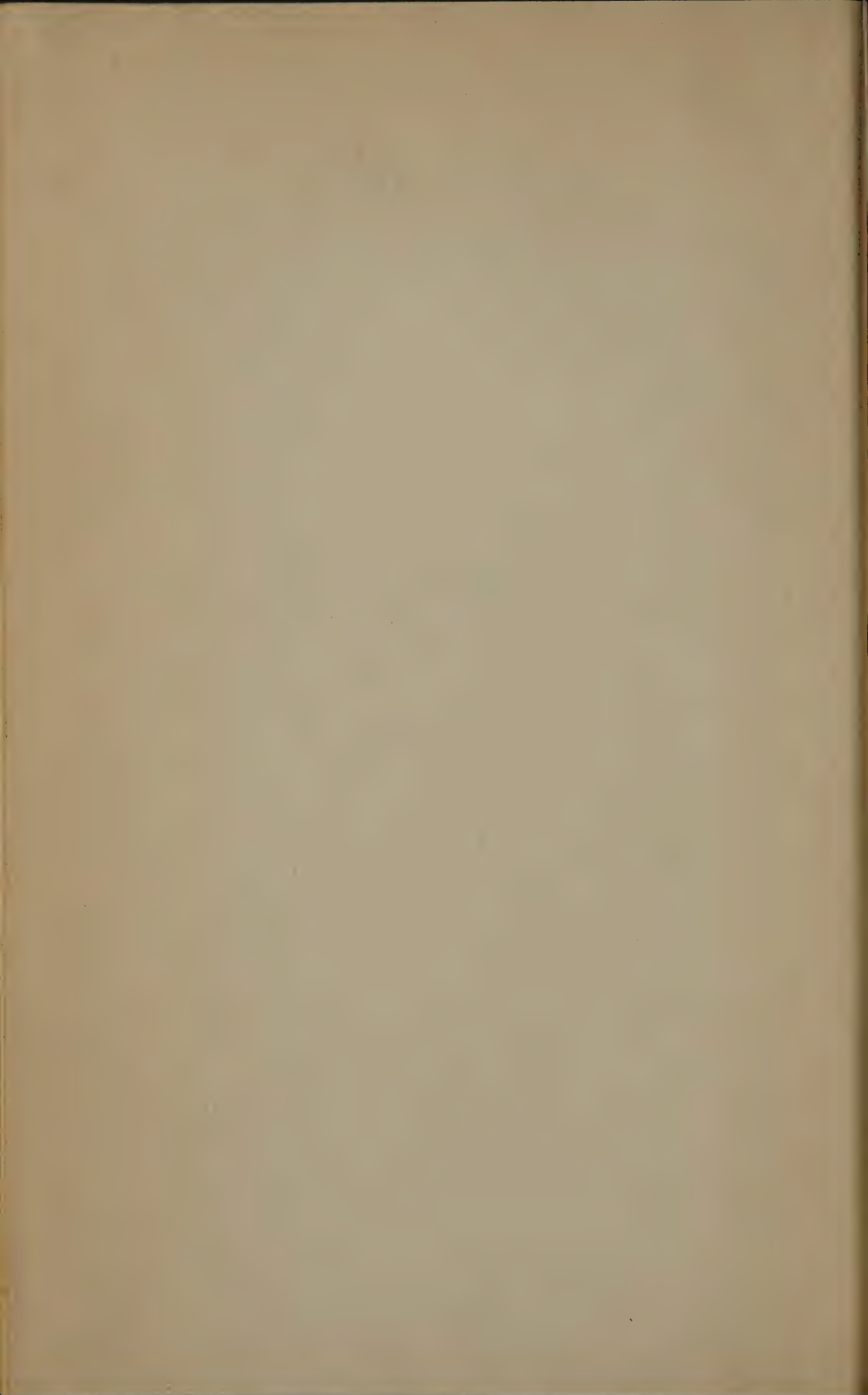


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INTRODUCTION

The increasing interest in the history of the church which is being manifested by Mennonites of the present generation is encouraging. It speaks of increasing appreciation for the rich heritage of faith and life which is one of the most precious possessions of the church, as well as a growing recognition of the value of the service of the devoted men and women of the past who have made that heritage possible.

The Mennonite Church has indeed a rich and inspiring history, one which is abundantly worthy of study and appreciation. Mennonites constitute but a small group today, numbering altogether less than 500,000 souls round the world, yet one which has cherished high ideals and has committed itself to great and enduring principles. It has paid the price in blood and tears for devotion to these principles in past years and centuries when such principles were not only unpopular but were considered as outright heresy by Protestants and Catholics alike. Yet until recent years the story of Mennonite life and faith has remained largely untold except by the enemies of the movement. Even in America, where Mennonites have lived in peace and liberty, undisturbed and free, they have remained for the most part an obscure group, forgotten by all but their neighbors who have known them as a quiet, unassuming body of earnest, sincere Christians, substantial citizens of the community and the nation. Inasmuch as the Mennonites of America have paid scarcely more attention to their own history than their neighbors have, very little of the story of their 250 years of life in America has been given to the public.

The production of a number of valuable volumes of Mennonite History in recent years is therefore a very interesting and encouraging development. Outstanding among these volumes have been the rather comprehensive regional histories of Mennonites in Illinois (1931), in Lancaster Conference (1931), and in Ontario (1935). The present volume, which presents the history of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference in easternmost Pennsylvania forms a welcome and long-awaited addition to this growing list of regional histories.

Franconia is in several respects the mother conference of Mennonites in America. It was the very first settlement, antedating in its earliest beginnings at Germantown in 1683 the Lancaster settlement by more than a quarter of a century. Within its bounds the first conference was held (1725), at which the historic "Eighteen Articles of Dordrecht" were adopted as the official confession of American Mennonitism. It also remained the literary and to some extent spiritual leader of New World Mennonitism throughout colonial days. Settlers from its territory founded many new settlements in Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Ohio. Franconia has also preserved in its customs and traditions more nearly the ancient Mennonite forms of worship, doctrine, and church government than any other American district. It has perhaps for this reason remained slightly behind the more aggressive settlements farther west in certain types of

INTRODUCTION

Christian activity. Yet many communities and many individuals look with affection and regard toward old Franconia, and think with appreciation of the sturdiness with which it maintains our four century old simple, biblical nonresistant Mennonite faith.

Franconia Mennonites are fortunate to have had among their number laymen of vision and initiative who formed the Franconia Mennonite Historical Society and who have projected and financed the enterprise of publishing an exhaustive history of the conference district. They are also fortunate to have found among their own number an able historian, with capacity for patient, detailed research, equipped with sound historical judgment, ready to give himself with unremitting devotion to what must have been a truly tremendous and at times thankless undertaking. The author has also brought to his task a sympathetic understanding of his church coupled with a deep personal loyalty to the principles for which that church stands. These qualities of mind and heart will be amply evident to those who will take the time to read carefully the pages of this well-written and comprehensive volume.

In conclusion may I say that I have watched the growth of the original manuscript of the Franconia history through the past year with great personal interest and participation, and am happy to have the privilege of commending the finished work to all Mennonites who love their church and appreciate their rich spiritual heritage. This book is to be commended not only to those of the passing generation who know by personal experience much of the story which this volume tells, but also to the host of younger people of the coming generation, who, like the author of this work, face the future with eager zeal, ready and glad to play their part in building that still stronger, more fruitful Mennonite Church which by the grace of God is yet to be.

Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.
March, 1937.

HAROLD S. BENDER.

PREFACE

On Saturday, October 4, 1930 a meeting of those interested in the history of the Mennonite Church was held in the Plain meetinghouse near Lansdale, Pennsylvania. Oscar Burkholder of Breslau, Ontario, was present and aided in effecting an organization. At that meeting John D. Souder was chosen as chairman and Samuel R. Swartley, secretary. At a later date Ernest R. Clemens was chosen as treasurer and David K. Allebach, vice president. No membership lists have ever been prepared. The purpose of the organization, the Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, was to compile and publish a history of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference. Representatives of the several congregations subsequently volunteered to submit congregational histories. A number of these congregational histories were submitted; but for a number of years little progress was made toward the final writing and publishing of this regional Mennonite history.

The Society also began in 1931 to sponsor public programs. These annual meetings were intended to stimulate interest in Mennonite history. Besides using local speakers men were secured from various parts of the church. Among those who served on the programs were Dean Harold S. Bender of Goshen College; Bishops S. F. Coffman of Vineland, Ontario and John S. Mast of Elverson, Pennsylvania; Preachers Oscar Burkholder of Breslau, Ontario and John F. Bressler of Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Orrie O. Miller of Akron, Pennsylvania.

On September 10, 1935 the officers again took up the matter of the Franconia history and appointed me to write the book and prepare it for publication. A month later I began the work. For a little over a year I devoted my time and energy to historical research and the writing of this volume.

The only Mennonite history which had previously given detailed attention to the churches of the Franconia Conference was Daniel K. Cassel's *History of the Mennonites* (1888). Two years later Cassel revised and enlarged the book and published it in German, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*. Cassel was a pioneer and his work is not without value. But his research was neither exhaustive nor critical. And of course it is almost fifty years since his books appeared. While he was of the Oberholtzer branch of the church his treatment of the Franconia Mennonites was quite sympathetic and his book found a ready sale among them. However he seemed to ignore, when possible, the fact that the Mennonites of southeastern Pennsylvania are not all in the same conference; in some cases it is difficult to know which group he is treating. It appears that Cassel leaned heavily on county histories for the history of the several congregations before his time. I have also found county histories helpful. Family genealogies contained much information which I used. In addition I made a careful study of the sources. This is where I encountered difficulty. Practically no records were kept. I had to rely on deeds, wills, tombstone inscriptions, old letters, diaries and the testimony of aged people. People frequently submitted data, part of

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which was reliable and part of which was conjecture or tradition, without indicating which parts were well attested; this further increased my difficulties. On the other hand there are some exceptions to the rule that the Franconia Mennonites kept no records. There are three notable exceptions: The Skippack alms book which furnishes a list of the ordained men of the Skippack preaching "circuit" since 1738; the similar Franconia alms book whose audits date back to 1767; and the Conference minutes kept by Preacher Jacob B. Mensch from 1880 to 1907. I have worked through all these sources and have been richly rewarded.

It is, of course, impossible to make a thoroughly exhaustive study of the history of the Franconia Mennonites in one year. But the present book though written in a popular, and I hope a readable, style, does represent a rather intensive study. I have striven for historical accuracy; in other words I have tried to write the truth. If any mistakes have been made in the past they can better be overcome in the future by acknowledging them than by falsifying or suppressing history. Although great effort was expended to avoid mistakes the book will probably be found to contain errors of detail.

As the title indicates this book deals chiefly with the Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church. The Mennonite Church has a membership in America of about 50,000. The Franconia Conference (with a membership of about 4,200) is located chiefly in Bucks and Montgomery counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. There are also a few congregations in Berks and Chester counties; and at one time the Franconia Conference had churches in Lehigh and even in Northampton county. Locally the members of the Franconia Conference are known as "Old" Mennonites. It is of this group that all but Part V of this volume treats. In the same general territory as that covered by the Franconia Conference there is a conference of Mennonites who are locally known as "New" Mennonites. More properly they are the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. They represent the followers of John H. Oberholtzer, who with a portion of the Franconia Conference, separated from the parent body in 1847. Oberholtzer's conference thrived, and by affiliation with various Russian Mennonite groups who emigrated to America and with other Mennonite bodies, now has a total membership in America of more than 35,000. This group is briefly treated in Part V, Chapter II.

I cannot here even begin to make a list of those who helped in the preparation of this history. Due credit is extended in the proper places throughout the book. However I must acknowledge the assistance of five brethren in a special way. I am deeply indebted to my friend and teacher, Dean Harold S. Bender, Th.D., for reading the entire manuscript and offering many valuable critical suggestions. He also kindly arranged for the typing of the manuscript. John D. Souder also offered many helpful suggestions and put at my disposal an invaluable collection of books and notes dealing with the field in which I worked. This represented fifty years of active interest on his part. The fellowship we enjoyed on the numerous trips we made together will always be a pleasant memory to me. The assistance of my father,

PREFACE

A. Martin Wenger, was indispensable in the translation of many pages of Pennsylvania German dialect. Not only does he know the dialect thoroughly but he is able to make nice discriminations in translation. Finally I am grateful for the work of two ministers, Wilson R. Moyer and Jacob C. Clemens, who read through the entire manuscript in behalf of the Franconia Conference. While many friends have aided in the preparation of this manuscript for the press I assume full responsibility for any errors of fact or judgment. My sister, Thelma Mae (Mrs. Paul L.) Harley, kindly helped in the preparation of the indexes. She also did much painstaking copying of documents for other parts of this volume.

The Franconia Conference has lost many young people; it should be much larger. But great progress has been made, especially during the last generation. For this and for all the rich blessings we enjoy I give thanks to the great Head of the church. May God continue to bless this small part of His kingdom.

Telford, Pennsylvania
March, 1937.

JOHN C. WENGER.

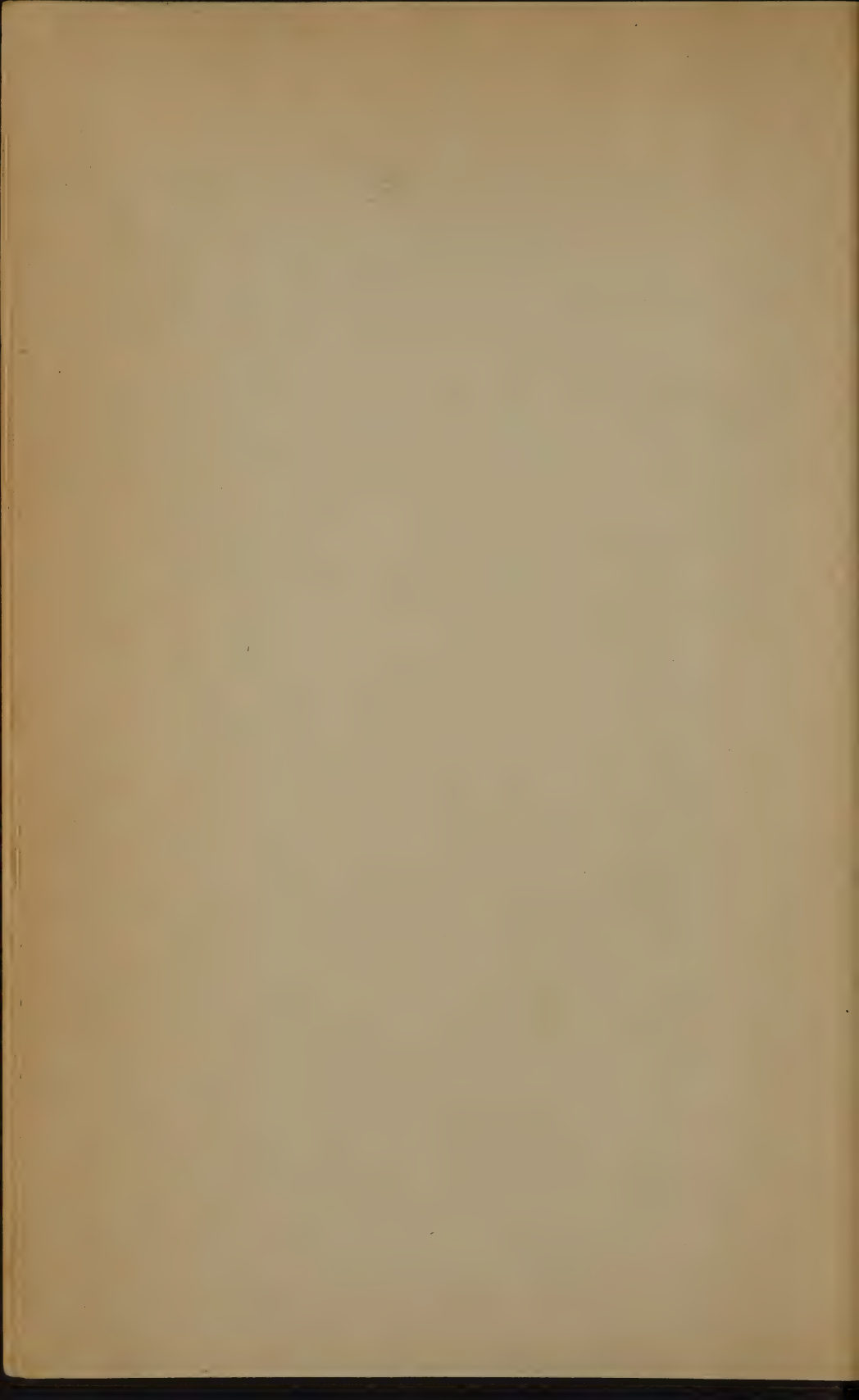


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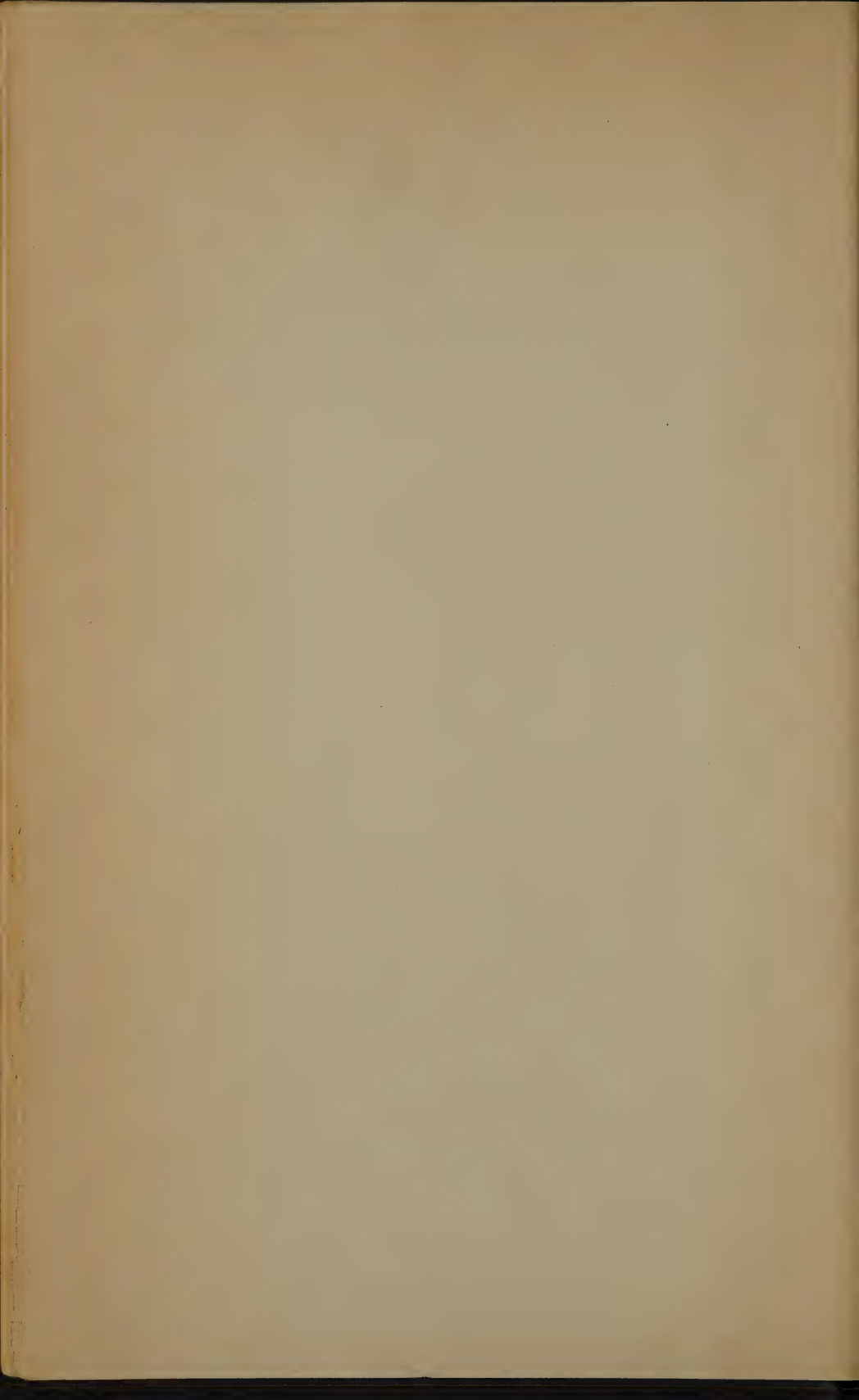
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Part One
GENERAL HISTORY



Chapter I

THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

Before taking up the story of the first permanent Mennonite settlement in America and the formation of the several congregations now comprising the Franconia Conference it will be interesting and profitable to inquire into the origin and early history of the Mennonite Church in Europe.

During the early part of the sixteenth century there were two movements which together gave rise to the denomination which we now know as the Mennonite Church. The first was the Swiss Brethren movement, and the second was the Dutch Anabaptist movement.

The Swiss Brethren were led by such men as Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock. Conrad Grebel was born about 1498 and spent six years of his young manhood in the universities of Basel, Vienna, and Paris. In 1522 this brilliant scholar began the Christian life and in a short time was an appreciated supporter of the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli. Felix Manz, a pious and learned scholar, being especially proficient in Hebrew, was a close associate of Grebel. George Blaurock was a converted monk from Chur who became a powerful preacher of the Swiss Brethren faith. The center of the Swiss Brethren activities was Zurich, Switzerland.

During 1523 there began to be grave doubts in the minds of Grebel and his friends as to the character of the church Zwingli was attempting to establish. The Swiss Brethren conceived of the church as consisting of believers on Christ who had voluntarily accepted baptism and were walking in newness of life. The church was to be a spiritual brotherhood and as such altogether free from any state interference. The use of force for any purpose was held to be contrary to the ethics of the New Testament and impossible for the Christian. Zwingli, on the other hand, turned to a state church organization which would set up a partnership between the state and the church, and would secure church membership of the citizens of the state by means of infant baptism. Other issues were involved such as the tempo of the reform and the practice of social justice; but the chief difference concerned the nature of the church.

The Swiss Brethren began their organization by the first baptisms in January, 1525; Zwinglian persecution began at once and within a fortnight there were fourteen arrests. Grebel died of the plague at Maienfeld, whither he had fled, during the summer of 1526. On January 5, 1527 Felix Manz was martyred in Zurich by drowning. George Blaurock, not being a citizen of Zurich, was severely beaten and exiled from the city. He fled to other parts of Switzerland and finally to the Tyrol where he found a new field of spiritual activity, only to be burned at the stake on September 6, 1529. In one of his hymns he had written: "As he himself our sufferings bore,

When hanging on the accursed tree, So there is suffering still in store, O pious heart for you and me."¹

On April 23, 1529 a decree of the Diet of Speyer ordered the execution of any Anabaptist wherever found within the Holy Roman Empire without trial. Nevertheless, the church enjoyed a remarkable growth in these early years in spite of fierce attacks. But before 1600 the Swiss Brethren were largely annihilated; only a few remained in Moravia and Switzerland.

Why did the Catholic and Protestant state churches persecute our ancestors so fiercely? Simply because they stood for religious principles unacceptable to these groups. The death sentence of Felix Manz contained the following charge: "He and others have undertaken to bring together through Anabaptism such as were minded to accept Christ, to give heed to His word and walk according to it, and leave the others undisturbed in respect to their faith."¹ "Anabaptists were imprisoned, exiled and executed in all countries, Catholic and Protestant, and oppressed by all the state churches. Their sin was not heresy, but the demand for absolute soul liberty. Whatever benefits the Reformation may have brought to the world, religious toleration was not one of them. The great error of the Anabaptists was that they were just three centuries ahead of their time."² This persecution continued for over two centuries, although the last execution occurred in 1614. The Swiss authorities even went so far as to sell Mennonites to the Italians for galley slaves on their vessels.

The persecution of the Swiss Brethren drove a number of them to leave their homes in the Swiss mountains and go down the Rhine river to the Rhenish Palatinate. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) with its ruin and death left the Palatinate greatly wasted and with a seriously reduced population. It was that latter fact which induced a number of Palatine Counts to invite various persecuted groups to settle in their land. These groups were promised limited religious toleration. In 1664 such limited toleration was extended by Count Ludwig to the few remaining Swiss Brethren in the Palatinate — probably as an inducement for other Mennonite settlers. The Mennonites (Swiss Brethren) were allowed to worship in groups of twenty families, but not in public meetinghouses. "No outsiders were to be received into the Church by rebaptism."³ The only reason the Swiss Mennonites even considered accepting such terms was that at that very time the Swiss cantons of Zurich and Bern (where the Mennonites lived) were engaged in a determined effort to root out Mennonitism. Smith describes the fierce persecution of 1671 in Switzerland³ and goes on to tell of the consequent exodus of many Mennonites to the Palatinate. In 1695 the Mennonites "were permitted to build their first house of worship, but on a back street, without a tower or bell, and to hold their services one hour later than those of the established Reformed Church."⁴

¹ *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July, 1933, Article by John Horsch: "The Struggle Between Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren," p. 156.

² Smith, C. Henry, Ph.D.: *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania*, Norristown, Pa., 1929, pp. 18 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 29 ff.

⁴ Dr. William I. Hull: *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 1935, p. 191.

In 1709 the Swiss fires of persecution again waxed hot and there was another flight of Mennonite refugees down the Rhine to the Palatinate. "It was these Swiss refugees of 1671 and 1709 who reseeded the Mennonite communities in the Palatinate and whose children and grandchildren furnished Mennonite immigrants to Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century."³ The reasons for this emigration of the Palatine Mennonites to Pennsylvania are quite evident: they suffered severely from heavy taxes, war ravages, etc., and especially were they moved to action by the religious persecution they had to endure all through the eighteenth century. Church services could no longer be held in public meetinghouses, and during the latter part of the century they were even denied the privilege of burying their dead in the city cemeteries. Their children were not allowed to enter the trades.³ This persecution occurred under Catholic counts whereas the counts who had granted them limited toleration the previous century were of the Reformed faith.

But now we must leave the Swiss Brethren movement to turn back to about the year 1530 and give our attention to the other movement which gave rise to the Mennonite Church. This movement arose in the Netherlands. Unfortunately the early period of Dutch Mennonite history is somewhat obscure. Here in the Netherlands the great leader and organizer, though not the founder, was Menno Simons. Menno was born in 1496 in Witmarsum, Friesland,⁵ and was educated for the priesthood in the Catholic Church. In 1531 Menno heard of the execution of a Dutch Anabaptist named Sikke Snyder. This incident impressed Menno and he began to study the Scriptures. Soon he was convinced that he was part of a sinful system; but he was at first unwilling to follow the truth. Finally, having made a full surrender, on January 30, 1536 he renounced the Catholic Church and joined a peaceful group of Anabaptists called Obbenites. Soon Obbe Philips, their leader, baptized Menno. The latter part of the same year Menno received a call to the ministry. He himself describes the call as follows:⁶

"About a year after this . . . seven or eight persons came to me, who were of one heart and one soul with me, in their faith and life . . . separated from the world . . . and willing to bear the cross . . . In the name of the God-fearing ones . . . they entreated me kindly and earnestly to take to heart the very sad condition of the poor, oppressed soul and use to advantage the talent which I had unmeritedly received from the Lord." After a struggle, realizing on the one hand his own weakness and the fierce persecution he would face; and on the other hand the pitiable condition of the Brethren, "for," says he, "I saw plainly that they erred as innocent sheep which have no shepherd,"⁶ he accepted the call. Obbe Philips ordained him as bishop or elder.

Menno is one of the most inspiring and influential leaders in Mennonite history. He traveled about through northern Germany and the Netherlands, with a price on his head, preaching and organizing churches. He also

⁵ John Horsch: *Menno Simons, His Life, Labors and Teachings*, Scottdale, Pa., 1916, p. 18.

⁶ Quoted by Horsch, *ibid.*, p. 33.

found time to write a score or more of books and booklets. He died at Wuestenfelde near Lübeck in 1561. His followers were dubbed Mennonites by opponents as early as 1544, and this has become the accepted name of the church, both Dutch and Swiss branches.

As in South Germany and Switzerland, so here in the north the Dutch Mennonites gave their lives for the Faith, "not accepting deliverance." Pennypacker wrote:⁷ "There were nearly as many martyrs among the Mennonites in the city of Antwerp alone as there were Protestants burned to death in England during the whole reign of Bloody Mary." But again, as in the south, the movement spread rapidly. One of the leaders, Leonard Bowens, kept a record of 10,680 baptisms which he performed in fifteen years. The Dutch Mennonites were persecuted even more harshly than the Swiss Brethren, though the persecution did abate sooner than in the south. Between 1550 and 1600 some Mennonites fled across the channel to England and there planted Anabaptist ideas such as religious freedom, separation of church and state, nonresistance and nonswearing of oaths. This influence was at least partially responsible for the rise of the Friends and Baptist churches, for these groups adopted these doctrines as a whole or in part. Many Dutch Mennonites also fled for refuge to the region about Danzig where large congregations exist to this day.

Though all too briefly, we have now traced the history of the Mennonite Church in the two original movements in the early sixteenth century. By far the greater part of the present Franconia Mennonites trace their lineage to the Swiss Brethren movement where the first congregation was organized in Zurich in 1525 and which spread rapidly over Switzerland, South Germany and into the Palatinate. Only a few Franconia Mennonite families trace their lineage to the Dutch Anabaptist movement which arose a few years later in the Netherlands and whose members were named Mennonites after the most prominent leader, Menno Simons. However it was the Dutch-North German Mennonites who furnished the first Mennonite settlers in America. Stray Dutch Mennonite traders and colonists found their way to America perhaps as early as 1645. And a Dutchman named Plockhoy, of Mennonite ancestry, perhaps himself a member of some Mennonite group, had established in 1663 a Mennonite⁸ colony of forty-one souls on a small stream called the Horekill, which empties into Delaware Bay. A year or so later, during a war between the Dutch and the English, the latter plundered the colony and scattered the settlers. We do not know what became of these Mennonites. But curiously enough about thirty years later Plockhoy, blind and penniless, appeared with his wife in Germantown, and was cared for by Germantown Mennonites until his death.

⁷ Quoted from E. K. Martin by Weaver, Martin G.: *Mennonites of the Lancaster Conference*, Scottsdale, Pa., 1931, p. 5.

⁸ Mennonite historians have always considered these colonists Mennonites. But Dr. William I. Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 402, calls them a "Quaking Society."

Chapter II

A BRIEF GENERAL HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENTS¹

The cradle of American Mennonitism is Germantown. And the man who made Mennonite emigration to America attractive was an English Quaker, William Penn (1644-1718), in whose proprietary colony the village of Germantown was founded.

From July to October, 1677, William Penn traveled in Holland and Germany on a preaching tour and came in contact with Mennonites in Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Friesland. Three years later he petitioned King Charles II of England for a grant of land in what is now Pennsylvania in payment of the large debt which the king had owed Penn's deceased father, Admiral William Penn. On March 14, 1681 Penn received a royal charter granting him forty thousand square miles of land, now called Pennsylvania.

At once Penn's agent, Benjamin Furly, published Dutch and German pamphlets advertising Pennsylvania. But there is no evidence to support the oft-repeated claim that Penn extended a personal invitation to the Mennonites to come to Pennsylvania.

What enthusiasm Penn's offer must have aroused among the suffering Palatine farmers! For example one catches a note of breathless eagerness in a letter² written by Henry Frey of Heilbron (Germany) to his son Henry in New York. The letter is dated, February 6, 1681—before Penn received his grant. Perhaps Penn dreamed of his "holy experiment" for many years—and told his dream! It is claimed, for example, that George Fox "... cherished the ideal of a Quaker land of refuge somewhere in the New World" as early as 1672.³ An extract from Frey's letter follows:

Thousands would gladly leave the Fatherland if they had the means to do so. A merchant from Frankfort was with us last week and informed us how along the Rhine a number of families have banded to-

¹ It is not possible for the present author to make an exhaustive study of the Mennonite settlements in what is now seven counties (Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, Chester, Lehigh, Northampton, and Philadelphia), together with the European background of the settlers, though such a study would certainly be valuable and desirable.

The section on Germantown is based on the careful work of Dr. Harold S. Bender, "The Founding of the Mennonite Church in America at Germantown, 1683-1708," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, October, 1933, Goshen, Indiana, pp. 227-250; and on the recent monograph of Dr. William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 1935.

The recent work of Dr. C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century*, Norristown, Pa., 1929, has been very helpful. In fact the author relied heavily upon Dr. Smith's study.

² Published in the *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, 1913, pp. 34, 35.

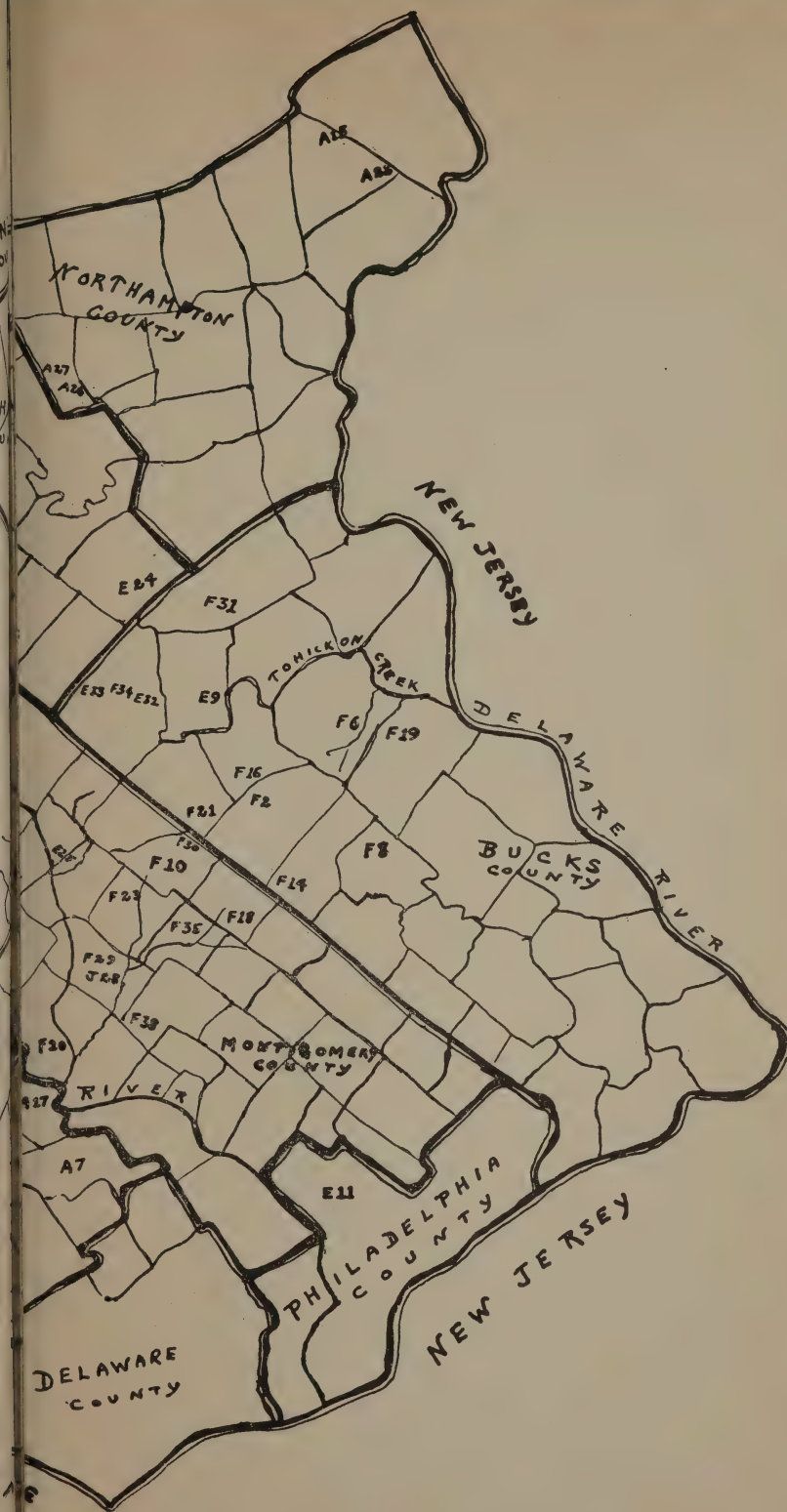
³ Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration* . . . , p. 386.

Meetinghouses Erected
By The Franconia Conference
Mennonites.

- F - Now in the Franconia Conference.
E - Now in the Eastern District
Conference of the General
Conference Mennonites of N.A.
J - Now in the possession of the
"Johnson" Mennonites.
A - Now abandoned by the
Mennonites

- E 1 Bartlets'
F 2 Blooming Glen
F 3 Boyertown
A 4 Charlestown
A 5 Coventry
F 6 Deep Run
A 7 Diamond Rock
F 8 Doylestown
E 9 Fallland
F 10 Franconia
E 11 Germantown
F 12 Hereford
A 13 Hersteins'
F 14 Lexington
A 15 Mount Bethel
F 16 Perkasie
A 17 Phoenixville
F 18 Plain
F 19 Plumstead
F 20 Providence
F 21 Rockhill
A 22 Rothrock
F 23 Salford
E 24 Saucon
E 25 Schwenksville
A 26 Settlement
A 27 Siegfrieds
J 28 Skippack, Lower
F 29 Skippack, Upper
F 30 Soudertown
F 31 Springfield
E 32 Swamp, East
E 33 Swamp, West
F 34 Swamp
F 35 Towamencin
E 36 Upper Milford
F 37 Vincent
F 38 Worcester





gether to accept the invitation of an Englishman, named William Penn, who had recently visited that community, to settle in that beautiful land and there establish new homes. After I had received this information I went at once to our minister, whose parents live at Worms, on the Rhine, and begged him earnestly to learn what truth there was in these reports and to find out, if possible, if there would be any opportunity for us to join them and go to the New World. He then informed me that these reports were all true and that he had been informed by one who had inside knowledge, that in a place called Kriegsheim, near Worms, many were preparing themselves to go to the New World . . . ⁴

On April 11, 1683 Francis Daniel Pastorius, a Pietist of Frankfurt a. M., visited several families in Crefeld, Germany. Among the later emigrants to America were these families whom Pastorius visited. Pastorius sailed for Pennsylvania from London on June 6, 1683 and arrived at Philadelphia, August 20, 1683. On July 24, 1683 the Crefeld emigrants sailed from Gravesend, England, on the ship, *Concord*. They constituted a party of thirteen men, eleven women, one youth and eight children—a total of thirty-three. Two infants were born at sea and one woman died in Philadelphia before the group arrived at the place of their final settlement (Germantown). The Crefelders, by this time thirty-five in number, arrived at Philadelphia on October 6, 1683. James Claypool, a Londoner who had advanced half of the passage money for the Crefeld group, reported, “. . . the blessing of the Lord did attend us so that we had a very comfortable passage and had our health all the way.”⁵

The names of the men in the Crefeld party were, Derick Isaacs Op den Graeff, Herman Isaacs Op den Graeff, Abraham Isaacs Op den Graeff, Lenard Arents, Thones Kunders, Reiner Tijsen, Willem Strepers, Jan Lensen, Pieter Keurlis, Jan Siemes, Johannes Blijkers, Abraham Tunes, and Jan Luykens. All these men but Herman Op den Graeff, Willem Strepers, Jan Siemes, and Abraham Tunes were accompanied by their wives. Margrit Op den Graeff was unmarried. The youth was Lenart Streypers. The woman who died in Philadelphia was the mother of the Op den Graeffs.

On October 12, 1683 Penn granted six thousand acres of land to the Crefeld party and Pastorius, half of which was to be reserved for the Frankfort Company which Pastorius represented as agent. On October 24 Penn's surveyor, Thomas Fairman, surveyed fourteen lots and the next day the thirteen men and Pastorius met in the “dug-out cabin” of Pastorius, now the site of Number 502 South Front Street, Philadelphia, and drew lots for their respective parcels of land. The Crefeld pioneers then settled down for

⁴ Frey came to America. His son Henry eventually bought a large farm near Frederick, Pa. He (the son) was buried on this farm in what is now Bertolet's Mennonite burying ground. According to a memorial stone in the cemetery Frey was a Huguenot.

⁵ Quoted by Dr. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

the winter on their newly purchased land, while Pastorius continued to live in Philadelphia at least until the summer of 1685. Thus Germantown was settled by these "Germans" from Crefeld. Pastorius was not the leader of the party, but he did render valuable assistance to them and in time cast in his lot with them and "became their mouthpiece and historian." The man who was most influential in leading the Crefelders to emigrate was Jacob Telner, a merchant who had himself visited America. Baptized by the Mennonites in 1665, he became a Quaker about a decade later, only to finally return to the church of his fathers. He was one of Penn's agents.

These early settlers were not farmers but were chiefly weavers. As there was at first little market for their goods they had a hard time getting a start. Germantown was sometimes called "Armentown,"—the village of the poor. But in a few years they were well established. One settler, Cornelius Bom, who arrived in 1684 later wrote back to Europe, ". . . I have a cow which gives plenty of milk, a horse to ride around, my pigs increase so rapidly so that in the summer I had seventeen when at first I had only two. I have many chickens and geese, and a garden, and shall next year have an orchard if I am well, so that my wife and I are in good spirits, and are reaching a condition of ease and prosperity in which we have great hopes. But when we first came it was pretty hard in most respects . . ."⁶

Mennonite historians have always looked upon Germantown as the cradle of American Mennonitism. And they were right in doing so. Nevertheless it is true that almost all of the pioneers who arrived at Philadelphia on October 6, 1683 were, or later became, Quakers. Jan Lensen is a notable exception. He remained a Mennonite. Abraham Op den Graeff evidently returned to the Mennonite Church in his old age. It will be convenient to call these folks who had been won over from the Mennonites to the Quakers, Mennonite-Quakers.

There were a number of Mennonite-Quakers along the Rhine in 1683. For more than a score of years before that time Quaker preachers had been preaching and winning converts among the German and Dutch Mennonites. "It was Stephen Crisp who established the Quaker Church among the Mennonites of Crefeld."⁷ Dr. Bender estimates that about forty Mennonite families from the various localities in Germany came together at Germantown between 1683 and 1708. Dr. Hull accounts for four hundred seventy-three Dutch and German settlers in Germantown from 1683 to 1709.

The following list of settlers is Dr. Bender's list of Mennonites.⁸ The dates given represent the time of arrival or the earliest date in which the person is known to have been in Germantown. The footnotes are the present author's and are based chiefly on the recent study made by Dr. Hull. The settlers are here grouped according to the territory from which they came.

⁶ Quoted by Dr. C. Henry Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷ Smith, *ibid.*, p. 77.

⁸ Bender, *op. cit.*

I. CREFELD-LOWER RHINE GROUP

1. CREFELD:

- Jan Lensen, Oct. 6, 1683.
 Abraham Op den Graeff,⁹ Oct. 6, 1683.
 Herman Op den Graeff,¹⁰ Oct. 6, 1683.
 Isaac Jacobs van Bebbber, 1684.
 Jacob Telner,¹¹ 1685, with wife and children, returned to London in 1698.
 Hans Peter Umstat, Oct. 12, 1685 (with wife Barbara, d. Aug. 12, 1702, son John, daughter Anna Margaretha, d. Feb. 10, 1696, and daughter Eve, m. Hendrick Pannebecker, 1699).
 Klas Jansen, 1685.
 Jacob Isaacs van Bebbber,¹² 1687.
 Jan Streypers,¹³ 1687 (?).
 Jan Neuss, 1690 (1698 ?).
 Paulus Kuster by 1693 (d. 1707), with wife, Gertrude Streypers, and sons, Arnold, Hermannus and Johannes.
 Hendrick Sellen, by 1688.
 Willem Hosters,¹⁴ 1702.
 Hans Neuss, by 1702 (withdrew soon after 1702).
 Cornelius Tyson, 1703 (d. 1716).
 Dirck Sellen.¹⁵

2. LOWER RHINE:

- William Rittenhouse, 1688, born in Mongowerhand at Broich, near Mülheim on the Ruhr, became a citizen of Amsterdam in 1678; with wife, two sons, Gerhard and Claes, and daughter Elizabeth, m. Heivert Papen.
 Hendrick Kasselberg, by 1691, from Backersdorf in the country of Brugge.
 Jacob Godshalk and wife 1702, from Goch.

3. UNCERTAIN ORIGIN, PROBABLY FROM THE LOWER RHINE:

- Heivert Papen, 1685, probably from Mülheim on the Ruhr, d. Feb. 19, 1707, m. to Elizabeth, dau. of Wm. Rittenhouse.
 Paul Engel, before 1698.
 Conrad Jansen, before 1707.
 John Krey, before 1702.
 Herman Tunes.¹⁶

⁹ Then a Mennonite-Quaker; later returned to the Mennonites.

¹⁰ A Mennonite-Quaker.

¹¹ Then a Mennonite-Quaker, later a Mennonite.

¹² For a time a Mennonite-Quaker; returned to the Mennonites.

¹³ Perhaps a Mennonite-Quaker, he later returned to Europe (Kalderkerk).

¹⁴ Perhaps a Mennonite-Quaker.

¹⁵ Between 1685 and 1690.

¹⁶ Before 1708.

II. HAMBURG-ALTONA GROUP

1. ALL IMMIGRANTS LEFT ALTONA ON MARCH 5, 1700:

Harmen Karsdorp, Jr., wife Adriana de Voss, and children.

Isaac van Sintern, wife Cornelia Classen, and daughters, Magdalena and Sarah, d. Aug. 23, 1737, buried at Skippack.

Heinrich van Sintern.

Paul Roosen and wife Anna; returned to Hamburg soon after arriving.

Claes Berends and wife Tryntje, probably returned in 1705, when their land was sold.

Cornelius Klassen, father-in-law of Isaac van Sintern.

2. UNCERTAIN ORIGIN, PROBABLY FROM HAMBURG-ALTONA:

Isaac Karsdorp, 1700 (d. before 1708; m. widow of Willem Hosters, cf. Cassel, D. K., *Kulp Family History*, p. 431).

Arnold van Vossen, 1700.

III. THE PALATINATE GROUP

1. WOLFSHEIM:

Martin Kolb (the first three Kolbs were unmarried before their arrival).

John Kolb

Jacob Kolb

Henry Kolb

Barbara Kolb (There is no trace of a sister of the Kolb brothers by this name. She may have been the wife of Henry Kolb, married after arrival.)

2. UNCERTAIN ORIGIN:

Hendrick Kassel (A Hendrick Kassel from the Palatinate was baptized in 1694 in the church at Hamburg-Altona, cf. Roosen, B. K., *Geschichte der Mennoniten-Gemeinde zu Hamburg und Altona*, 1886, I, p. 59).

Wynant Bowman

Hans Graf¹⁷

Gerhard Clemens, 1709.

IV. THE NETHERLANDS GROUP

Dirck Keyser, 1688, from Amsterdam, d. Nov. 30, 1714

Peter Keyser, son of Dirck, 1688, from Amsterdam, joined the Dunkards in 1719.

¹⁷ Dr. Hull, *op. cit.*, lists him in the group from "Krefeld and Kalderkerk;" he also includes Matthias van Bebber, a Mennonite, in the same group.

Other Mennonite members by 1708 as listed by Dr. Hull include Maria Sellen, Altien Teissen (Tyson) and Margaret Teissen of "Krefeld and Kalkerkerk;" Catherine Kasselberg of Backersdorf, Germany; and John Gorgas, Margaret Huberts, Helena Krey, Altien Rebenstock, Christopher Timmerman (Zimmerman?), Mary Tuynen, Civilia van Vossen and Maria van Vossen, "From Unstated Places in Holland or Germany." This list is evidently taken from Morgan Edwards.¹⁸

It should also be noted that the Quakers aided the Palatine Mennonite emigration to America in 1709. Perhaps they were encouraged to do this by their success in gaining proselytes among the Mennonites. For example, Thomas Chalkley of Philadelphia traveled through Holland and western Germany in 1709 preaching Quakerism. He wrote, "I know not that I ever met with more tenderness and openness in people than in those parts of the world. There is a great people whom they call Mennonists, who are very near to truth, and the fields are white unto harvest among divers of them, spiritually speaking."¹⁹ In May, 1709 Henry Gouldney made application to the London Meeting for Sufferings for assistance "on behalfe of abo^t Sixty Persons y^t have been lately obliged to Leave their Native Country the Palatinate on Acco^t of General Poverty and Missery (and are now here) being by Religion them called Minists."²⁰ But a committee brought back a report that the "Minists" were being taken care of. Nevertheless the minutes of the yearly meeting include the following, ". . . the meet for sufferings may advance as they see meet for Relief and assistance of some poor Palatinate People called Minists any sume not exceeding fifty pounds."²¹ On July 1 "Dan Phillips Bro^t in a Receipt of forty-eight pounds paid on the Minists acco^t for their Passage to Pennsilvania, and that y^e Remainder was given to y^e Surgion [on board the ship?]."²¹ And William Penn wrote to his secretary in Pennsylvania, James Logan, "Herewith comes the Palatines, whom use with tenderness and love, and fix them so [with land] that they may send over [to their homefolks] an agreeable character [of their new home]; for they are sober people, divers Mennonists, and will neither swear nor fight. See that Guy [the captain of their ship] has used them well."²²

This, in brief, is the story of the settlement of Germantown. Let us now turn our attention to other Mennonite settlements of southeastern Pennsylvania.²³

The first outpost of the Germantown Mennonite Church was the settlement on the Skippack.

Matthias van Bebber began the settlement of his six-thousand-acre tract

¹⁸ Morgan Edwards, *Materials Towards A History Of The American Baptists*, Philadelphia, 1770. See the critical discussion of Morgan Edwards' list by Dr. Bender in the article referred to in footnote 1.

¹⁹ Quoted by Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 387, 388.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 388; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

²³ The Conestoga and Pequea settlements, now the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, will not be discussed.

along the Perkiomen and its Skippack branch, in 1702.²⁴ Among those who settled at Skippack in that year were Johannes Custer,²⁵ Claus Jansen,²⁶ and Jan Krey.²⁷ In 1708 the settlers included Christopher Zimmerman²⁸ and Hermannus Custer.²⁵ In 1709 Preacher Martin Kolb²⁹ and his brothers, Johannes²⁹ and Jacob,²⁹ followed. In that year (1709) began a steady stream of Mennonite immigrants from the Palatinate.

In 1713 the Skippack settlers petitioned the Philadelphia court for a road to their settlement. Among the signers were (Bishop) Jacob Gaedtschalck,³⁰ Gerhard Clemens,³¹ and Peter Seller.

In 1725 the residents petitioned the Philadelphia court to have the township laid out and surveyed. Those who signed the petition were, Klas Jansen,²⁶ Johan Umstat,³² Peter Bon, Henry Pannebecker, Hermanus Custer,²⁵ Paulus Frid, Johannes van Fossen, Johannes Friedt, Hans Tetweiler, Jacob Scheimer, Paul Friedt,^{32a} Willem Weirman, Nicholas H-st, Henrich Kolb,³³ Martin Kolb, Jacob Kolb, Jacob Merckley,^{33a} Arnold van Fossen,³⁴ Isaac Dubois, Huppert Kassel,³⁵ John Pawling, John Jacobs, Richard Jacob, Michael Ziegler,³⁶ Christoph Dock,³⁷ Hans Volweiller, Valentin Hunsicker,³⁸ Richard Göbel, Matthias Teissen,³⁹ Arnold van Vossen, Jacob Op den Graff, George Merckle, Daniel Deesmont, and Peter Jansen.

The Palatine Mennonite immigrants, largely farmers, passed by the Germantown settlement and pressed on to the Skippack and Pequea settlements. The Skippack colony began to enlarge and spread out. To the west Mennonite settlements were planted in the Schuylkill valley (now in Chester and Montgomery counties) and on up into the Manatawny section in what

²⁴ On the Skippack Settlement see, *Bebber's Township and the Dutch Patroons of Pennsylvania*, Reprinted from the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* for January, 1907 (Van Bebber never lived in his township).

²⁵ His father brought him from Crefeld to Germantown by 1693.

²⁶ Also a Crefelder.

²⁷ Probably from the Lower-Rhine.

²⁸ From Duisburg, Germany (Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 409). Perhaps he was a Mennonite.

²⁹ Originally from Wolfsheim in the Palatinate.

³⁰ Originally of Goch in the Lower-Rhine region near the Dutch border.

³¹ From the Palatinate, the ancestor of the Clemens family in the Franconia Conference.

³² From Crefeld.

^{32a} A son-in-law of Hans Stauffer of the Schuylkill valley was named Paul Fried.

³³ The Kolbs came from Wolfsheim in the Palatinate. Henry and Martin were preachers and Jacob was probably a deacon.

^{33a} Said to have been a Lutheran.

³⁴ Probably from Hamburg-Altona.

³⁵ An immigrant of 1717, evidently from the Palatinate. (See Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 134.)

³⁶ A Mennonite Church trustee in 1717.

³⁷ The noted schoolmaster. See Part IV, Chapter I.

³⁸ Born in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, in 1700. Came to America with his maternal grandfather, Bishop Valentine Clemmer, in 1717. (See Smith, *op. cit.*,

³⁹ Naturalized in 1709. Came from "Krefeld and Kalderkerk," Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 406. p. 133.)

is now eastern Berks county. At the same time the Skippack colony was expanding northward through Montgomery county, following the Perkiomen and the Skippack, and across the line into northwestern Bucks county, soon reaching into the southeastern part of what is now Lehigh county. Eventually this expansion reached into Northampton county. At the same time Mennonites were settling in the northwestern part of Bucks county, many coming from the Skippack colony but a few also coming southeastward from the Swamp and Saucon settlements. Let us examine these settlements in a more detailed manner.

The Skippack Mennonite meetinghouse was erected about 1725. A few years later the Towamencin meetinghouse was erected on the farm of Bishop Jacob "Gaedtschalck." By 1738 the Salford⁴⁰ Mennonite congregation had become separate from the Skippack Church.

The Salford trustees, Henry Funk,⁴¹ Christian Myre, Junior, Abraham Reiff, and Dillman Kolb⁴² granted a deed of trust on January 25, 1738 to seventeen members of the congregation.⁴³ Eleven of these men were of Salford township—Nicholas Holdeman, Christian Allabaugh, Henry Rutt,⁴⁴ Hans Ulrich Berge,⁴⁵ Hans Weyerman, Garret Clements, Feltus Kratz,⁴⁶ Jacob Clements, Johannes Clements, Hans Reiff,⁴⁷ Frederick Alderffer.⁴⁸ The other six were of Franconia township—Christian Myre,⁴⁹ Senr, An-

⁴⁰ See James Y. Heckler, *History of Lower Salford Township*, Harleysville, Pa., 1888.

⁴¹ Mennonite bishop and author. His son, Christian, says his father came to America in 1719.

⁴² Brother of Henry, Martin, John, and Jacob. He came to America in 1717. He was also a Mennonite minister.

⁴³ Deed at Norristown, Pa., vol. 36, p. 491.

⁴⁴ He himself wrote his name, Ruth.

⁴⁵ Settled in Salford by soon after 1717.

⁴⁶ Landed at Philadelphia on the ship, *Friendship*, October 16, 1727. Feltus is a colloquial form of Valentine.

⁴⁷ "Erected the first log cabin in the Salford region in 1718." Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 138, 139.

⁴⁸ Friderich Aldorfer arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Samuel*, August 11, 1732. He was from the Palatinate and in America became an indentured servant to Hans Klemmer. (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 198).

One of his descendants, Romanus G. Alderfer (d. 1936), had a copy of *Gueldene Aepfel In Silbern Schalen*, with the following written in German script on the inside of the front cover, "Disses buch gehört mir fridrich alltöffer und Wers Mir stilt Der Ist Ein dieb. ann 1741." Other writing including the name Hans Clemer (?) and the date 1731 is found on a flyleaf. The book is now in the possession of the author. But a Frederick Aldorfer arrived on the same ship a year later. The relation of these names to each other is not known.

⁴⁹ The Moyer Family History, p. 17, states that Christian Meyer owned land in America by 1719. But Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 136, 180, cites evidence that the families of Christian Mayer and Ulrich Stauffer and two other families had been driven from the canton of Bern several years prior to 1727. On May 6 of that year a number of elders wrote from Mannheim in the Palatinate to the Amsterdam Mennonite Committee saying they were sending these four Swiss refugee families on to America. Mayer arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Friendship*, on October 16, 1727.

drew Swartz,⁵⁰ Henry Clemer, Jacob Hackman,⁵¹ Ulrich Hunsberger, and Jacob Landes.

One of the earliest Mennonite settlers in the Schuylkill valley was Hans Stauffer, who had first settled in Carolina in 1709, but who had settled near Valley Forge a year later. About 1720 Francis Buckwalter settled near the present borough of Phoenixville. In 1719 John Roth located along the Schuylkill.⁵² Hans Jacob Bechtel^{52a} emigrated to America about 1720 and settled on a 366 acre tract (now the Ringing Rocks Park, Pottstown, Pa.) which he bought of Ludwig Christian Sprogel on October 8, 1720. Daniel Longenecker^{52a} emigrated from Switzerland^{52b} to America between 1719-1722. He settled near Royersford in 1733. In 1726 the Dutch Mennonite "Committee for Foreign Needs" paid the passage of Hubert Brouer to Pennsylvania. Brouer carried a letter from Peter Roth of Hesse to his brother, John Roth, near Valley Forge. Brouer evidently also settled in the Schuylkill valley—and became more than a mail carrier—for he later married John Roth's widow! Another early settler was Henrich Wenger,⁵³ originally of the canton of Bern, Switzerland, who emigrated from the Palatinate to America about 1717. In Europe Wenger had a taste of Swiss persecution.⁵⁴ After arriving in America he settled along the Schuylkill and on September 15, 1718 bought 100 acres of Ludwig Christian Sprogel within the present borough limits of Pottstown. He died in 1753 and was survived by nine

⁵⁰ Arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Molly*, September 30, 1727.

⁵¹ "Hackman was a common Mennonite name in the Palatinate." (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 201).

⁵² Roth and his wife Barbara of Dirmstein in the Palatinate received a letter of credentials from Elder Jonas Lohr, dated May 30, 1717 and addressed to the brethren in Holland. The letter, also signed by Peter Colb, Velte Huetwohl, and Hans Burkholder, announced the intention of Roth to emigrate to Pennsylvania with his wife and children, and commended them to the kindness of the brethren. (See Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 180).

^{52a} A Mennonite minister.

^{52b} The *Longacre Family History* states (p. 73) that the Longeneckers were originally French Huguenots who fled to Zurich, Switzerland, after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (August 24, 1572). The book also indicates that the grandfather of Preacher Daniel Longenecker lived at Hamburg for a time (p. 89). On the whole the book seems to be a confused mass of data.

⁵³ His descendants spell the name, Wanger.

⁵⁴ Wenger was originally a weaver of Wattenwil, now a large town, beautifully situated about a two hours ride from Thun, at the foot of the picturesque mountain chain of Stockhorn. Wenger became a Mennonite and while living at Martissegg, near Signau, he was arrested for his faith and deported in the autumn of 1709. Returning later he was again arrested and imprisoned. On March 18, 1710 Wenger with forty-four other men and ten women, all Mennonites (Täufer), were taken down the Rhine, under guard, arriving at Mannheim in the Palatinate on March 28, and at Nimuegen on April 6. Here the captives were set free but were destitute. They were supported for a number of years by the Mennonites of that place. In February, 1717 the elders of the church at Nimuegen decided to call on the Netherlands for aid in removing the increasing number of Swiss Mennonite exiles to America. Their appeal met with success and Wenger was among those who reached America.—Geo. F. P. Wanger, Pottstown, Pa.

children, his children marrying into the following families: Brower, Switzer, Heistand, DeHaven, Souder, and Wisler.

The Schuylkill settlement grew slowly. A later settler was Jacob Schantz (1710-1781). Schantz was born in Switzerland. On February 9, 1737 he secured permission from the Bernese officials to emigrate. He was granted this permission and late in that year he came to America. Schantz⁵⁵ finally settled at what is now Pottstown and in time acquired 500 acres of land. Another early settler in the Coventry region was Hans Switzer,⁵⁶ who died by 1749. He purchased 339 acres of land on September 5, 1739. In 1734 Jacob Engers⁵⁷ purchased⁵⁸ 367 acres of land. He died in 1749. When Engers and Switzer settled in the Schuylkill valley is not known.

On December 7, 1748 Jacob and Esther Engers conveyed 118 acres and 140 perches to their son-in-law, Andrew Hight (also Hait, or Heath). On June 27, 1751 Andrew and Magdalena Hight conveyed two acres of land to Daniel Longenecker,⁵⁹ Martin Beigle,⁶⁰ Jacob High,⁶¹ alias Hoch, Casper Acre,⁶² Johannes Buckwalter, and Jacob Engers. These men were the Coventry Mennonite Church trustees and it was on this two acres that the first Coventry meetinghouse was erected about 1753.⁶³

In 1765 Nicholas Halderman and his wife Elizabeth⁶⁴ moved from Lower Salford township, Montgomery county, to Charlestown township,

⁵⁵ In the records of the *Staatshaus* at Bern, Switzerland, his name is spelled, Tschanz. He purchased seven tracts of land in Pennsylvania and each time his name is spelled differently,—Schaunce, Shans, Schans, Schantz, Schants, Shantz, Shontz.

His second wife was Catherine, daughter of Christian Beary.

In 1753 he contributed fifteen shillings toward the erection of the Coventry Mennonite meetinghouse.

Schantz's children married into the Reiff, Heneks, Longenecker, Herstein, Berge, Wanger, Paul, and Miller families.—Geo. F. P. Wanger.

⁵⁶ One of his children, John, married Veronica Wanger; another, Elizabeth, married Yost Engers.

⁵⁷ One of his children, Yost, married Elizabeth, daughter of Hans Switzer; "Machtally" (Magdalena) married Andrew Hight.

⁵⁸ On February 15, 1717 Hubert Castle bought 367 acres and allowance in Coventry township. Castle conveyed this tract to Jacob Engers on January 14, 1734. He received a patent for the land on July 28, 1748.

⁵⁹ A Mennonite minister, located at Mingo, near Royersford. He attended the 1725 Conference; he and Jacob Bechtel represented the "Manatant."

⁶⁰ Son of preacher Hans Jacob Bechtel who attended the 1725 Conference. Martin Bechtel (1710-1786) was ordained as preacher in 1739 and as bishop in 1758.

⁶¹ A son of Melchior High, a settler who owned land adjoining the Bechtel farm, and who died about 1743.—Geo. F. P. Wanger.

⁶² An early land owner in Coventry.—Geo. F. P. Wanger.

⁶³ See note 55. In 1798 a second Coventry meetinghouse was erected on the site of the present building. In 1890 the 1798 building was rebuilt. A stone in the wall of the present building has both dates, 1798-1890, cut upon it. Through someone's carelessness 1798 was taken for 1728 and the latter date has often been published as the date of the first Coventry meetinghouse.

⁶⁴ Daughter of Hupert Cassel and his wife Sydge Op den Graff.—Geo. F. P. Wanger.

Chester county. Catherine, daughter of Nicholas Halderman, married John Rhoades, on whose land the Vincent Mennonite meetinghouse was erected.⁶⁵

While the Schuylkill valley was being settled another Mennonite colony was being established farther north in the "Manatant" region, now the eastern part of Berks county. It is said that Hans Bauer located in the eastern edge of the Manatant section as early as 1717, being one of the immigrants of that year.⁶⁶ Daniel, son of Hans Stauffer (who settled near Valley Forge in 1710) bought land in Colebrookdale township, Berks county, on January 8, 1720.⁶⁷ Daniel's brother, Jacob Stauffer, purchased land in Colebrookdale township, on December 30, 1724.⁶⁷ On March 11, 1729 Ulrich Beidler⁶⁸ bought 121 acres.⁶⁷ Hans Siegfried was in Oley before 1719.⁶⁹ Franz Latschaw arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Mortonhouse*, on August 24, 1728.⁶⁹ Johann Peter Moll^{69a} arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Albany*, September 4, 1728.^{69b} He settled in Berks county. Preacher George Bechtel also arrived on the *Mortonhouse*. Nicholas Ish⁷⁰ arrived (sick) on the ship, *Pink Plaisance*, at Philadelphia on September 21, 1732 and made his way to Berks county. Johannes Buckwalter, Samuel Hoch, and George Merkle were among those from Berks county who were naturalized in 1730.⁶⁹ In 1734 the tax list of Colebrookdale township included the names of Jacob Buckwalter, Michael Bauer, and Peter Beidler.⁶⁹ Other early landowners in the community were the Yeakels, Kriebels, Eschbachs, Schultz's, and Gehmans.⁶⁷ Christian German (Gehman) arrived on the ship, *Samuel*, August 11, 1732,⁷¹ and was an early settler in Berks county.

According to tradition the first Hereford Mennonite meetinghouse was erected in 1732. It stood on the land of Ulrich Beidler—as the Mennonites later regretted!⁷²

While the Schuylkill valley and the Manatant were being settled the northwestern part of the present Bucks county and the southern end of the present Lehigh county began to receive Mennonite settlers. In 1717 Bishop Valentine (Velte) Clemmer emigrated to America⁷³ and settled in the upper part of Bucks county. In 1725 he subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith, representing "Great-Swamp." The first meetinghouse erected in this territory was built in 1735, according to tradition. This was the (West)

⁶⁵ Information from Geo. F. P. Wanger. See Part II, Chapter V.

⁶⁶ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 140. Dr. Smith says the Yoders, "undoubtedly . . . of Mennonite stock" had settled in the Oley region before 1714.

⁶⁷ Information from Mary L. Bower, Boyertown, Pa.

⁶⁸ The first Hereford meetinghouse was erected on his land.

⁶⁹ Smith, *op. cit.* p. 141.

^{69a} An early Hereford Mennonite preacher.

^{69b} Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁷⁰ Now Ehst.

⁷¹ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 196. "A Christian Gaueman was a Bernese exile in the Palatinate in 1711." Smith, *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁷² Beidler became incensed at the congregation and sold his property to a Catholic. See Part II, Chapter VI.

⁷³ See the 1773 letter in the appendix.

Swamp meetinghouse. A tax list of 1734 includes the following names which appear to represent Mennonites, Melchior Hoch,⁷⁴ Samuel Musselman, Jacob Hoch, and Jacob Hiestand.⁷⁵ That same year a petition for naturalization included these names, Christian, John, and Jacob Klemmer, John Yoder, Sr., Abraham Shelly,⁷⁶ John Landes, Abraham Heystandt, and John Yoder, Jr.⁷⁷

The congregations in what is now lower Lehigh county (Saucon and Upper Milford) were more or less extensions of the Swamp settlement. "According to local land records the following were granted land in what is now Upper Saucon township between 1734 and 1738,—Valentine Young,⁷⁸ Benedict Gehman,⁷⁹ George Bachman,⁸⁰ and Philip Geisinger.⁸¹ A little later appear the names of John Reesor,⁸⁰ Samuel Bechtel,⁸² and others."⁸³

Several miles northwest of the Swamp settlement and several miles west-southwest of the Saucon Mennonite settlement was located the Mennonite colony in what is now Upper Milford township, Lehigh county. "It has been traditionally reported that this congregation was founded and organized previous to the year 1740, or as early as 1735. It is true that the Mennonites settled very early in several parts of Upper Milford previous to the year 1735, and without any doubt they organized their congregation previous to the year 1740."⁸⁴ "Among the first members of the congregation were, John Stahl, Derrick Jensen, Conrad Stamm,⁸⁵ Henry Schleiffer, George Weiss, John Stauffer, Abraham Meyer, Ulrich Bassler,⁸⁶ Jacob Hiestand, Daniel Stauffer, John Meyer, John Gehman, Peter Meyer, Henry Funk, Michael Meyer, Philip Geissinger, Christian Musselman, Rudolph Weiss, Barbara Stauffer, John Schantz, Sarah Meyers, Catherine Stauffer,

⁷⁴ Now often written High.

⁷⁵ A Jacob Hiestand arrived on the ship, *Friendship*, at Philadelphia, October 16, 1727.

⁷⁶ "Naturalized in 1734 from Bucks county. The pioneer of nearly all the Shellys in Bucks county. See Davis, *History of Bucks County*."—Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁷⁸ Valentin Jung arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Charming Polly*, October 8, 1737.

⁷⁹ Perhaps originally from the canton of Bern, Switzerland (see note No. 71). Brother of Christian who settled in Berks county. The Gehman brothers arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Samuel*, August 11, 1732.

⁸⁰ A Saucon Mennonite Church trustee in 1751.

⁸¹ Also a church trustee in 1751. There was a Bishop Philip Geisinger during the Revolutionary War period.

⁸² Hans Jacob Bechtel of Coventry had a son, Preacher Samuel Bechtel (d. 1802) who settled at Saucon and later at Rockhill. The relationship of this Samuel Bechtel to the one arriving on the ship, *Robert and Alice* September 30, 1743, is not known. On the same ship came a Hans Georg Begtel.

⁸³ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 143 (footnotes 78-82 are chiefly by the present author).

⁸⁴ Mathews and Hungerford, *History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon*, 1884, p. 374.

⁸⁵ Arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Alexander and Ann*, on September 5, 1730.

⁸⁶ Arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Pleasant*, on October 11, 1732.

Daniel Greter, Christian Oberholtzer, Elizabeth Stauffer, Henry Fretz, Anna Meyer."⁸⁷

The Springfield Church was also established before the Revolutionary War.⁸⁸

While the Coventry, Hereford, and Swamp congregations were being established the original Skippack colony had expanded to the north and northeast. As we have seen Salford was a distinct congregation by 1738. But by that time this Mennonite expansion had also reached into what is now Franconia township, Montgomery county. In fact there is a tradition that the Franconia meetinghouse, also used for school purposes, was erected about 1730.⁸⁹ And Henry Funk, later a bishop, settled on the Indian Creek as early as 1719. As we noted earlier in this chapter, six of the Mennonites to whom the Salford deed of trust was executed in 1738 were of Franconia township. "Among the taxables in Franconia township in 1734 are these Mennonites: Jacob Oberholtzer,^{89a} Uly Hunsberger, Jacob Fuhrman, Conrad Kuster, Heinrich Rosenberger,⁹⁰ Christian Mayer,⁹¹ Abraham Reif,⁹² and Jacob Hunsberger with perhaps several others."⁹³

Proceeding farther to the northeast the Mennonites settled in (West) Rockhill township, Bucks county. Among the early settlers was Michael Derstine⁹⁴ who located at the present Derstines' Mill about two hundred

⁸⁷ James J. Hauser, *A History of Lehigh County*, 1902, p. 106. Unfortunately Mr. Hauser fails to state his source. These names probably include Mennonites of other congregations.

⁸⁸ This is probably the "Term" (Durham) of the 1773 letter (see Part II, Chapter IX).

⁸⁹ The second meetinghouse was erected at Franconia in 1833. Elihu Clemmer related to the present author that his father, Deacon Abraham M. Clemmer (1793-1879), reported that the first Franconia meetinghouse stood about a century. But in 1930 there was a Mary Yoder, aged 96, living in Franconia township, who said she remembered the first log meetinghouse! Therefore the first building must not have been torn down at once when the 1833 meetinghouse was built. Did Deacon Clemmer mean the first building was used for a meetinghouse for a century? One cannot be certain.

^{89a} Was a Mennonite in the Palatinate in 1731. In 1732 his name appears on a Palatine list as a widower desiring to emigrate. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁹⁰ A. J. Fretz, *Rosenberger Family History*, p. 13, says the tradition of the family is that the Rosenbergers of Montgomery county "came from Germany from a place called 'Zweibrucken'" Henry Rosenberger, Jr., was a deacon at Franconia.

⁹¹ See note 49.

⁹² A Salford trustee in 1738.

⁹³ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁹⁴ Arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Samuel*, August 11, 1732, "Michael Dirstein." A letter had been written from Grumbach in the Palatinate to the Amsterdam Mennonites listing sixty prospective emigrants. Among them were, Christian Gehman, wife and unmarried brother; Michel Dierstein, unmarried; and Jacob Oberholtzer. Dr. Smith says, "Most of these immigrants came from the upper Palatinate, on the east side of the Rhine, in the general region of Heidelberg." The letter to Amsterdam was signed by the Mennonite ministers at Grumbach, Heinrich Kuendig, David Kaufman, and Michel Krebil. These ministers informed their Dutch brethren that most of these prospective emigrants either had money to pay their own passage or were promised aid from Pennsylvania. All they asked

years ago. He seems to have been a farmer, weaver, and miller. In 1737 he bought the farm at "Derstines" from his father-in-law, Deacon Jacob Kolb of Skippack. Michael Derstine became the first deacon of the Rockhill congregation. (Many of his descendants still worship at Rockhill.) In 1731 the same Jacob Kolb of Skippack bought the present Landis Brothers' farm and six years later sold it to his son, Isaac Kolb. Isaac was ordained to the ministry in 1744 and as bishop in 1761. The first Rockhill meetinghouse was built on the farm on which he lived—perhaps while he lived there. In 1764 he sold his farm to Preacher Samuel Bechtel of Saucon. Nine years later Bechtel gave a deed for the land on which the Rockhill meetinghouse already stood to Deacon Michael Derstine and Preacher Abraham Gehman.⁹⁵ A pioneer Detweiler seems to have later located near Sellersville.^{95a}

In 1744 Johannes Sauder^{95b} and brother emigrated to Pennsylvania and soon settled near the present borough of Telford.

While the Rockhill Mennonite settlement was being established a Mennonite colony sprang up ten or twelve miles to the northeast, on the Deep Run, a branch of the Tohickon creek. One of the first settlers in what is now Bedminster township, Bucks county, was Jacob Wismer. He arrived in Bucks county some time after 1720. Wismer emigrated from Germany, it is believed,⁹⁶ to Carolina in 1710. There he barely escaped with his life from an Indian raid, and subsequently fled to Pennsylvania. Other Mennonite settlers at Deep Run were John and Christian Fretz who emigrated from near Manheim in the Palatinate to America between 1710 and 1720.⁹⁷ Martin Oberholtzer (1709-1744) was born thirty miles from Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He emigrated to America and settled in Bucks county. He was buried in the Mennonite cemetery at Deep Run.⁹⁸ The first minister at Deep Run was Abraham Swartz,⁹⁹ who was also a trustee in 1746 when the first meetinghouse was built. The other trustees at that time were Hans

for was that the Dutch Mennonites should arrange that they get on a good ship with an agreeable captain! (Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196.)

⁹⁵ Son of Pioneer Christian Gehman of Berks county. Christian must have lived with his son in his aged years for he is buried at Rockhill.

^{95a} Deeds in the possession of Jonas M. Detweiler establish a Detweiler genealogy back to one Samuel Detweiler (d. 1808) who lived on the present Moser farm, Sellersville, Pa. Samuel was likely a son of Jacob Dedwiller (*Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, I, p. 609) who arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Brothers*, September 30, 1754. Samuel had a son Jacob (1764-1846) who in turn was the father of Preacher Jacob Detweiler (1795-1879). Preacher Jacob had a son Jacob (1830-1905) who was the grandfather of J. D. Mininger and Alfred A. Detweiler.

^{95b} Johannes Sauder arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Masliffe Galley*, December 22, 1744. John D. Souder says two Souder brothers came to what is now Telford, Pennsylvania, in 1746. (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 210).

⁹⁶ See *Wismer Family History* by A. J. Fretz, pp. 1 ff.

⁹⁷ A. J. Fretz, *Fretz Family History*, pp. 13 ff.

⁹⁸ A. J. Fretz, *Oberholtzer Family History*, p. 1.

⁹⁹ Abraham Swartz arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Friendship*, October 16, 1727. The next year his name appears on a petition from Skippack. In 1738 he was ordained to the ministry and in 1756 was "confirmed"—ordained bishop. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 185; 1773 letter (Appendix).

Friedt, David Kolb, Marcus Oberholtz, Jacob Wismar, and Jacob Oberholtz.

This is the background of the Franconia Conference. These original settlements—Skipack, Coventry, Hereford, Swamp, Deep Run—expanded until the present churches were established. The Lexington Mennonites bought land in 1752. The trustees at that time were Jacob Roar,¹⁰⁰ Christian Schwartz, Henry Shooter, and John Rosenberger. The first Blooming Glen¹⁰¹ Mennonite Church was built in 1753 on privately owned land.¹⁰² The Plain meetinghouse was also built on privately owned land¹⁰³ between 1760 and 1769. The Doylestown Mennonites purchased land for a meetinghouse in 1772.¹⁰⁴ Worcester, an extension of the Skipack settlement, is much older—ground having been donated for church purposes in 1739.¹⁰⁵ Providence was not mentioned in the 1773 catalog (see Appendix) but Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg said there was a Providence Mennonite meetinghouse already in 1742.¹⁰⁶ The Mennonites, Lutherans, and Reformed are said to have erected a union house of worship near Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, in the second decade of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁷ About 1772 the Mennonites erected a meetinghouse near Phoenixville but the church there never thrived. Before 1780 the Boyertown meetinghouse was erected for the convenience of the Hereford Mennonites who lived in the community. Similarly Hersteins' meetinghouse was erected about 1803 as an outpost of the Skipack congregation. The Charlestown meetinghouse was erected about 1795 for the convenience of the Mennonites living in that portion of the Schuylkill Valley. The Plumstead meetinghouse was erected in 1806 to similarly accommodate some Deep Run Mennonites.

But we must turn our attention to another group of churches which were established at an early date but which have long since ceased to live—the Mennonite churches of Northampton county.

At an early date there was a Mennonite settlement in the region of the present borough of Northampton. Hans Siegfried,^{107a} who had first settled in Berks county, later removed to Northampton county. "In the land records of Whitehall township of 1759, are to be found these Mennonite names:

¹⁰⁰ A Jacob Rohr and a Johannes Rohr arrived at Philadelphia on the ship, *Saint Andrew*, September 9, 1749 (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 210).

¹⁰¹ Until recently this congregation was known as Perkasioe.

¹⁰² A Henry Funk's land.

¹⁰³ The land of Henry Frey.

¹⁰⁴ The trustees were Jacob Rohr, Jacob Haldeman, Ludwig Switzer, and Jacob Kulp.

¹⁰⁵ The donors were Henry Rittenhouse, son of Preacher Nicholas (Claes) and grandson of the first American Mennonite minister, William Rittenhouse; and Jacob Stire, a non-Mennonite. (See Part II, Chapter III).

¹⁰⁶ Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pa.*, p. 1061.

¹⁰⁷ See Part II, Chapter XXXVI.

^{107a} "A certain Oswald Siegfried had been given a letter of recommendation in 1716 by two ministers from Manheim—Jacob Meier and Hans Jacob Schnebli" (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 187).

John Showalter,¹⁰⁸ Joseph Showalter, and Peter Bassler."¹⁰⁹ The Mennonites erected what has been styled the "Siegfried" meetinghouse on what is now West Twenty-first Street, Northampton, Pennsylvania, at least as early as 1761.¹¹⁰ In 1771 three Showalters—Joseph, John, and Jacob—sold their farms and moved to Lancaster county. And a few years later Bassler followed. Nevertheless the Mennonite settlement revived and in 1802 the congregation acquired a lot of land on the King's Highway near Howertown where they erected the "Settlement"¹¹¹ meetinghouse. The trustees in 1802 were Jacob Baer, Jacob Hiestand,¹¹² John Ziegler and Samuel Landis. This congregation never thrived. The General Conference Mennonites tried to revive the work in 1860 and various independent Mennonite preachers conducted services there later, but all in vain. The building has been converted into a dwelling.

Prior to 1794 the Mennonites had also erected a meetinghouse in the general vicinity of Bangor. This property¹¹³ was conveyed to two "Mennonist" trustees in 1798.¹¹⁴ The deed quotes from the will of the deceased Mennonite donor ". . . and in another part thereof he did give and devise three quarters of an Acre of the said land to the religious society of which he was a member, and on which they had built a House for the service of Public Worship" Services were later conducted there by the Evangelical Mennonites but the work was abandoned many years ago.

In 1822 the Mennonites erected a meetinghouse within the present borough of Bangor, Pennsylvania. This congregation seems to have been called "Mount Bethel."¹¹⁵ N. B. Grubb states¹¹⁶ that among the first settlers in the community were four Ackerman brothers who moved there from near Quakertown, Pennsylvania. "Other early settlers were Bowers, Bergeys, Bosserts, Delps, Hennings, Wargs, Reicharts, Ruths, Godshalls, Koppes, Rothrocks, Snyders, Funks, Schimmels."¹¹⁷ Services were also conducted

¹⁰⁸ On the ship, *Brotherhood*, which arrived at Philadelphia, November 3, 1750 were Jacob, Jacob, Sr., John, Christian, and Peter Showalter; and Peter, Jacob, Joseph, and John Bassler. Perhaps some of these Showalters later settled in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹¹⁰ See John Baer Stoudt, *The Life and Times of Col. John Siegfried*, pp. 29-37.

¹¹¹ The congregation was later known by that name. Whether this was the original name is not known.

¹¹² Various Hiestands emigrated to America; Jacob arrived at Philadelphia, October 16, 1727 on the *Friendship*, and probably settled at Swamp (see note 75). Heinrich Hiestandt arrived on the ship, *Brothers*, September 30, 1754.

¹¹³ Very likely this was the abandoned Rothrock meetinghouse, now in Washington township, Northampton county, which the Franconia Conference sold for twenty-five dollars in 1909.

¹¹⁴ Deed at Easton, Pa., E-2-79. The trustees were Owen Honsbury and Jacob Stauffer.

¹¹⁵ Bangor and East Bangor are located in Lower and Upper Mount Bethel townships, Northampton county.

¹¹⁶ 1915 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*.

¹¹⁷ A rather imposing list for so small a congregation! One wonders where these names were obtained.

Preacher John Geil used to journey to Northampton county to preach.

there by the Evangelical Mennonites but by 1878 the congregation had disintegrated and the aged minister, David Henning, deeded the property over to the Lutherans. There are now, therefore, no Franconia Conference congregations in Northampton county.

Several other meetinghouses were erected within the last century but which represent no new settlement. In 1818 a meetinghouse was erected near Schwenksville as a sort of outpost of the Skippack congregation. In 1847 the General Conference Mennonites took possession of the property and have a thriving congregation there. In 1835 the Diamond Rock¹¹⁸ meetinghouse in Tredyffrin township, Chester county, was erected. The man chiefly responsible for the building of this meetinghouse was Jacob Beidler (1778-1864), who moved from Montgomery to Chester county in 1802. There was never much of a congregation there. For a time an independent Mennonite, Israel Beidler, preached there. The Mennonite church made an effort to revive the work in 1908 but no congregation was established.¹¹⁹ The Diamond Rock meetinghouse was torn down in 1927.

The Flatland meetinghouse, near Quakertown, Pennsylvania, was erected in 1837 for the convenience of the Swamp and Springfield Mennonites who resided in the community. The General Conference Mennonites took possession of this meetinghouse in 1847.

Bertolets' meetinghouse in Frederick township, Montgomery county, was opened in 1847 and in the division of that year also came into the possession of the General Conference Mennonites.

Two new meetinghouses¹²⁰ have been erected by the Franconia Conference Mennonites since the division of 1847—Souderton and Perkasio. The Souderton meetinghouse was erected in 1879 for the Mennonites of Souderton and community. The congregation has grown splendidly and now has over five hundred members. The Perkasio meetinghouse was erected in 1909 for the convenience of the Mennonites living in Perkasio and vicinity. There is no organized Perkasio congregation, however. Perkasio is a branch of Blooming Glen.

It will thus be seen that the present Franconia Conference does not cover the geographical area of the original settlements which it covered in the days of the Revolutionary War. Those congregations which are centrally located in respect to the Mennonite population have grown. The middle bishop district now includes about sixty per cent of the whole conference. Outlying congregations have dwindled and in many cases become altogether extinct. There is no correlation whatever between the present sizes of the congregations and their ages. Worcester is about two centuries old and has about ten members; Souderton is about fifty-seven years old and has over five hundred members.

¹¹⁸ Also known as "Beidlers'" and "Chester Valley."

¹¹⁹ However the Frazer Mennonite congregation of the Lancaster Conference is partly a result of that effort. Some of the Diamond Rock benches are in the Frazer meetinghouse.

¹²⁰ That is, new locations, where there had not been Mennonite meetinghouses before.

Chapter III

HOME LIFE AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Life centered about the home and the church in the days of the colonial pioneers. Many products were homemade. The women boiled down bits of fat with lye and rain water and made their own soap. Rye or whole-wheat bread was baked in the old-fashioned bake ovens. Yeast was made from hops. Even a generation or two ago white bread was considered a delicacy to be set before visitors. Every farmer raised flax, and from it the women wove cloth, and made the clothing for the family. Butter, cheese and apple butter were all homemade, and many homes had stills, for wine and whiskey were indispensable as medicines; furthermore, many believed that strong drink enabled them to endure the cold of winter and the heat of the harvest field. Incidentally Bishop Matthias Pennypacker (1742-1808), was one of those who saw the dangers of moderate drinking and who strongly opposed the use of liquor in the harvest fields. Also there was formerly little or no objection to the use of tobacco.

The early homes had open fireplaces, grandfather clocks and much homemade furniture. Crude iron plates were set up as fireboxes; stoves came into general use much later.

Slavery was common even in Pennsylvania. The 1785 assessment of Montgomery county listed 108 negro slaves. But there is no evidence that any Mennonite ever owned one. However, there were many poor people who crossed the Atlantic without money and who became indentured servants for several years to those who advanced their passage money.

The historian, William J. Buck, has presented¹ the following description of Montgomery county, the heart of the Franconia Mennonite settlement, in 1784: "Though a century had elapsed since the first settlement, there was not a turnpike, no post office, no newspaper, no poorhouse, no canal, no academy, or even a secondary school in the county. No bridge had been erected over the Schuylkill or any of the larger streams, but instead they had to be crossed either at fords or ferries. Not a town within its entire area contained thirty-five houses . . . Only two stage lines (Bethlehem to Philadelphia and Reading to Philadelphia), making one trip weekly."

Our ancestors found little time to do much traveling. The usual mode prior to 1825 was walking or riding horseback. Then wagons began to come into general use. Stage lines appeared, only to be displaced by steam trains. The stages usually carried the mails. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the pioneers used no envelopes. The letter was simply folded, sealed with a blob of wax, and addressed.

Perhaps we can gain a better picture of the toil and hardihood of our ancestors if we think how farming must have been before the introduction of mowing machines, grain binders, threshing machines, disc harrows, grain

¹ Quoted in the Norristown, Pa., *Times-Herald*.

drills, steel plows, milking machines, telephones, electric lights, and all the great host of labor-saving devices which science and invention have given us. The pioneers had no hospitals and no free schools. They earned their bread in the sweat of their faces.

The appearance of our ancestors before the Revolutionary War was quite striking. The men wore buckle shoes, knee breeches, plain-collared frock coats, with no outside pockets, and high silk or beaver hats. A century ago they still usually carried a large kerchief on their heads, under their hats. After a dusty ride the hat was removed, and the weary traveler wiped the perspiration from his face with the handy kerchief. Instead of the neckties of today the men of the colonial era wore large red or black silk kerchiefs which they wound about the neck and tied in a bow. In summer time the men often went barefoot, even to the meeting. This was true as late as the early nineteenth century. In cold weather they wore heavy overcoats with capes over the shoulders. About the time of the Revolutionary War long trousers began to be generally adopted, and about a century ago the ordinary sack coat with a turndown collar came into general use. Mennonite ministers and deacons continued to wear the frock coat without a lapel, and the conference still encourages the laity to wear coats without lapels. The wearing of these "regulation" coats has received a great impetus since the World War. The old buckle shoes were long ago displaced by leather boots, which have also become obsolete.

In early times the hair was worn much longer than is usual today, and some of the men wore beards. But due perhaps to the Dutch Mennonite element in their inheritance there were fewer beards in Skippack than in the Conestoga settlement. Indeed the Skippack Mennonites seemed just a bit more progressive in general than their Lancaster brethren.

The women of a century ago dressed much different than today. Large bonnets called "Quaker" bonnets were worn. In time the bonnet became much smaller, and was even largely discarded in the eastern part of the district. In the 1880's Conference was actively opposing the wearing of hats by the sisters of the church. Within the present generation the wearing of a bonnet was finally made a test of membership. The bonnet was restored, though some members were lost to the church. Shawls and aprons were also worn in the early days. Not many women (apart from the wives of the ministers and deacons) wear the apron today. But "capcs," which seem to be a sort of sewed-on shawl, are common. In common with the women of other churches the sisters wore a cap of light-weight material over the head (now called the "devotional covering,"—based on I Corinthians 11) at least during worship. Today this covering is white in color. But several generations ago there were, at least in the Swamp bishop district, some black coverings. A generation ago these "coverings" were often left at the meetinghouse in the eastern end of the Conference district. Recently there has developed a tendency to wear them all the time, everywhere.

Apart from the regular religious meetings marriages and funerals were the occasions of the greatest social gatherings. All the young people appeared at the former—dressed in their best!

It should be noted that the bride's surname was always preserved in the form of the middle name of every child. For example Jacob Funk married Susanna Fretz and they were the parents of John F. (Fretz) Funk. There was simply no question as to what the middle initial of the children would be; the bride's surname settled that.

Funerals caused much work. Messengers rode horses over the countryside notifying friends and relatives of the funeral. If the death occurred in warm weather the funeral was held within a day or two, as there were no embalmers. The coffin was homemade and no outer box was used. For the grave marker someone took a slab of stone from a local quarry and carved a suitable inscription upon it. Many of these homemade gravestones are still quite legible.

Reverend Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the noted Lutheran pastor, tells of a funeral service which he conducted at Skippack in 1745.² Maria Salome Hallman, the wife of a Lutheran Elder at Trappe, died and was buried on September 26, 1745. " . . . Her husband dwelt near the Mennonite Meetinghouse, and had in former times helped to build their churchyard, wherein he had permission to have a plot for his family, for that reason he wished to have his wife buried there. There had gathered a large group for the funeral, since as they say, every one as he wished might go to the burial. After we had covered the corpse with earth, I wished to have the sermon under a tree because of the hot weather.

"The Mennonite minister who was present stepped up to me and said, I would like you to hold the sermon in our large Meeting House. I answered: that under our gracious king's sovereignty all parties [beliefs] are permitted in this land, so I will not interfere with your freedom nor cause strife. But the Mennonite minister continued to urge it and said, I wish you would not shun our church.

"I thought, perhaps, they might be more willing to grasp the word if their desires were granted. However, while entering, the aged minister said in my ear, I wish though that there be used no strange ceremonies. To which I replied, There will be employed by me none other than those of the Evangelical Lutheran [church] custom.

"After the sermon was over, the aged one excused himself and said, would I forgive him for his words, that he had not understood what were our usages. They were thankful with weeping eyes, that I, the Heavenly Messenger, (as they called me) had spoken in their edifice [midst].

"Since then I have frequently been obliged to speak in the same place at the funerals of our neighbors. The ministers were always present and declared that their souls were revived and hallowed thereby and bespake for themselves good friendship and neighborliness.

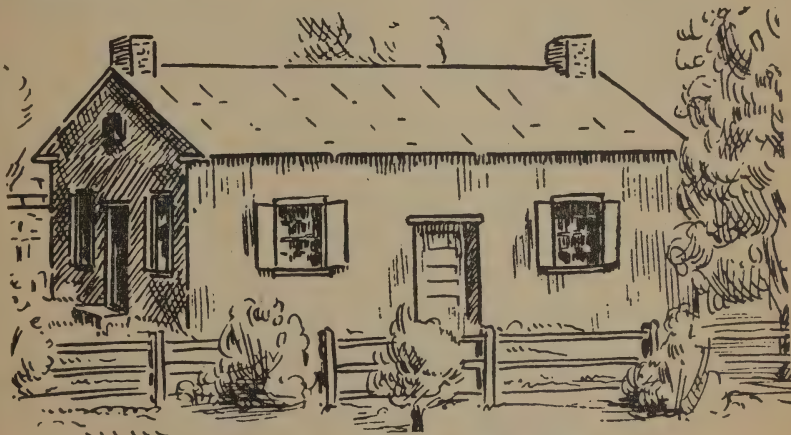
"I have in such sermons not spoken upon the disputed points between us and them, but have proclaimed atonement, faith, and holiness—so we all without discrimination may be complete in all things necessary."

² Published in an English translation from the original German in *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, October, 1934, pp. 57, 58.

The funeral was usually held in the forenoon. Many young men served as hostlers to care for the horses of those attending the funeral. Evidently some Mennonites tended to follow the custom of "sitting upstairs" during the services at the home. As late as 1884 Conference passed a resolution against the practice. At the meetinghouse the corpse was not taken inside, unless the weather was inclement. (This was true as late as fifty years ago). Sometimes a line of people walked by on either side of the coffin to view the corpse. After the burial and the funeral service a large crowd returned to the home of the bereaved for the "Trauer-Mahl." This mourning meal had probably been intended for the accommodation of those from a distance. But it developed into a social institution of questionable character. Conference had to protest against intemperate drinking on such occasions!

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the hymnbook used at all Mennonite funeral services was *Der Saenger am Grabe*.³ It is no longer in use.

The Mennonite pioneers^{3a} brought a German dialect with them from the Palatinate. Gradually a considerable admixture of English words and



Sketch of the Lexington Meetinghouse

Built —; Enlarged 1808; Razed 1868; Made from the Description of an Eyewitness.

phrases developed. The Bible was read in high German but the spoken language was this Palatine dialect, "Pennsylvania German." It is considerably used even today in parts of Bucks, Montgomery, Lehigh, Berks, Northampton, Lancaster, and other counties. In the territory covered by the Franconia Conference it is still spoken by many people. It is not a denominational dialect; Lutherans and Reformed use it as much as the Mennonites.

³ *Der Saenger am Grabe. Eine Auswahl Lieder, zum Gebrauch bei Leichen-Begangnissen; wie auch Trost-Lieder fuer Solche, die um geliebte Todte trauern*, Herausgegeben von C. G. Herrman, Reformirtem Prediger zu Kutztaun und Umgegend, 1842. Reprints, 1845; 1848; Allentown, 1852; Kutztown, 1856.

^{3a} Of course not nearly all the Palatines were Mennonites.

It is a household dialect, lacking cultural richness. In the Mennonite services a modified high German was used. Luther's Bible was read, but the exposition of the text was largely in Pennsylvania German.

As an illustration of the dialect the following poem is here reproduced.

DIE ALT FAMILIA UHR

By William Gerhardt

Was schteht dat in der Schtub im Eck
 Un tickt so reg'lar immer weg?
 Guck juscht mol hie un seh.
 Ei g'wiss, 's is die Familia-Uhr!
 Sie schteht schun langie Zeit doh, schur,
 Ganz staatlich, doch allee—
 Die trei alt Uhr!

Ihr K'sicht is noch so schee un rund,
 Der Kaschta noch so pleen un k'sund
 Wie Grandpap sie hutt 'kaaft.
 Un so kann sie noch johralang
 Fatmacha ihra reg'lar Gang
 So wie sie heit noch laaft,
 Die schee alt Uhr!

Schun hunnert Jahr hutt sie die Zeit
 Mit wunnerbarer Richtigkeit
 In Schtunna abgedeelt.
 Die Zeecha hen ihr Rounds gemacht
 Im hella Dag, in dunkler Nacht,
 Un's Glecklie hutt's gezehlt.
 Die gut alt Uhr!

In Freid un Leid, in Glick un' Not,
 In Wohlstand, Armut un im Dodt
 In jedem Leweeschtand,
 Heert ma' wie klingt ihr Schtunnaschlag
 Vun Eeens bis Zwelva, Dag vor Dag,
 Un's Ticka an der Wand.
 Die lieb alt Uhr!

Die trei Uhr geht als fat wie immer
 Vor Elt'ra, Kinner un Kindskinner,
 Doch nimmie vor sie all.
 Wie viel sin ganga aus der Zeit
 Dat niwer in der Ewigkeit
 Seit ihrem erschta Schall!
 Die trei alt Uhr!

Du liewie Uhr, dei A' gesicht
 Vergess ich all mei Lewa nicht;
 Ich schetz dich gar zu sehr.
 Un wann ich ah en Uhrcha seh,
 Weer's noch so zierlich un so schee.
 Dich liew ich doch noch mehr
 Mei altie Uhr!⁴

Many of the older people have their richest religious memories bound to their "Muttersproch" (mother tongue), Pennsylvania German. Some Mennonites strenuously resisted the change from German to English in the church service. On the other hand the use of Pennsylvania German seems to tend to an intellectual poverty, for when a great part of a person's thinking is done in a language in which he does no reading (as is the case with the typical Pennsylvania German farmer), what he does read in English is not grasped as quickly and fully as it should be. This is not due to an inherent mental weakness, but to the language barrier. Further when Pennsylvania Germans speak English certain sounds (the cognates) are poorly distinguished. For example it is difficult for a Pennsylvania German to distinguish some of the following pairs of words: search, serge; char, jar; vary, wary; bag, back; rib, rip; mate, made; face, phase; and even in some cases, worth and worse. When two consonants are involved, the case is still worse as, ragged, racket! This language barrier helps to account for the charge of plain stupidity sometimes brought against Mennonites (Pennsylvania Germans). May it not account for some of Major Kellogg's observations on the Mennonite conscientious objectors in the World War?⁵

Stark's, or *Haberman's Prayer Books* were found in many homes and seem to have been much used. One distinctive custom of the Franconia Conference Mennonites is the habit of often having prayer both before and after meals. The latter is called "returning thanks." But the great center of religious life was the public meeting. Even when spiritual life is at a low ebb church attendance is slow to lag.

One hallowed custom is the annual observance of the Lord's Supper. There is no evidence that communion was ever held in the fall except in a few congregations which alternated with a sister congregation. For example, Skippack and Providence observe communion in the spring, and Worcester in the fall. These members are thus privileged to partake twice each year. Vincent and Coventry used to alternate. Since services were discontinued at Coventry in 1914 Vincent now has communion services twice a year. But in general the Franconia congregations have communion only once a year in the spring. The old ministers defended this on the ground

⁴ *The Pennsylvania German*, East Greenville, Pa., March, 1907, p. 135 (spelling revised by the present author). The author used a few high German words such as *Angesicht* and *nicht* for poetic purposes.

⁵ Walter Guest Kellogg, *The Conscientious Objector*, New York, 1919, pp. 37-41. See the author's discussion of his criticism of the Mennonites, in Part I, Chapter VI.

that the Passover was an annual feast. It is customary for the bishop to preach as he breaks the bread and serves the congregation. Each member holds the bread received until all have been served. Then the congregation bow their heads and all eat the bread at the same time.

A century ago fast days were occasionally observed.⁶ Counsel meetings were held before baptism.⁷ These counsel meetings were probably held to give the congregation the opportunity to approve (or lodge complaints against) the reception of the candidates for baptism into the congregation.

At the present time one frequently hears old people commenting on the fact that when they were young the usual custom was to "marry and settle down" before taking up the question of their relationship with God and the church. And yet it is doubtful if this was ever exclusively the case. Perhaps it was only a latter nineteenth century development. Records are very meager. Deacon Jacob K. Overholt of the Deep Run congregation kept a church record from 1858 until his death in 1891. It is enlightening to examine the baptismal classes for a few years selected at random. Of the twenty-three baptized in 1858 (at Deep Run) there were only one married couple and two other married people; and the others were apparently single. At least all the others are designated as the sons or daughters of certain men. Now these sons or daughters could have been married. But inasmuch as Overholt specifies certain ones as husband and wife it is only reasonable to conclude that those designated as sons or daughters were still unmarried. In 1860 there were three married couples in a class of twenty. In 1862 there were five married couples, and one other married person in a class of thirty-seven. In 1864 all eleven were single. In 1868 there were seven married couples and one widow in a class of thirty-two. In 1874 seventeen single young people were baptized. But five years later there were twelve married couples and one other married person in a class of about forty. Of the ten baptized in 1881 there were three married couples and one other married woman. The next year there were a dozen baptized with only two married couples in the class. In 1883 there were five married couples in a class of thirteen. There were eight married couples in a class of twenty-nine in 1887. In 1890 in a class of five there were one married couple, another married woman, and two single persons.

That is as far as the Overholt record goes. The period covered, 1858-1890, is early, and the evidence tells us nothing about the practice after 1890. But there were evidently quite a few single young people uniting with the church seventy-five years ago. Just a generation ago there apparently was a large group of young people who married before baptism.

Preacher Abel Horning (1825-1906) of the Rockhill congregation also kept some records. In 1892 the class at Rockhill consisted of four married couples. The next year five married couples and three single persons were baptized. In 1894 seven married people and three single ones were in the baptismal class. In 1896 five married couples and two single people were

⁶ John F. Funk, *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers*, Elkhart, Ind., 1878, p. 91.

⁷ Christian Funk, *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1814, p. 22.

baptized. In 1898 ten single people and one married couple were baptized! What is the explanation? It lies in the spiritual revival effected in the district by the several months' preaching in the various meetinghouses and chapels by Daniel J. Lapp of Nebraska. Lapp spent from July to October, 1897 in the district. He did not extend evangelistic invitations, but he did preach vigorous Gospel messages which convicted young people of their need of salvation. About a hundred young people were received into the church at that time. This was the beginning of a new era for the Franconia Mennonites. It is probable that John S. Coffman also had a share in the spiritual life which has been awakened.

Active young men like A. D. Wenger also aroused the interest of the young people and helped them to feel that it was worth while to be a Mennonite! And men like Daniel Kauffman and S. G. Shetler have since been inspirational to the life of the group.

Now almost all who ever unite with the church do so during their "teens." Some even unite who later transfer their membership to other denominations.

Mennonites baptize by affusion. The usual place for baptism is in a meetinghouse. However if the applicant so desires he will be taken to a stream and there water will be poured upon his head in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Infant baptism is not recognized and consequently if any one who had been baptized as an infant desires to become a Mennonite he is rebaptized. Those who have been baptized upon their confession of faith are received without rebaptism unless they desire it. This applies both to those baptized by immersion and by affusion.

Today in many of the congregations the members express peace at counsel meeting by walking past the pulpit and shaking hands with the ministers and deacons who are standing there. But in the Skippack district peace is usually expressed by a rising vote.

One Mennonite practice which impresses visitors is the observance of the kiss of charity (based on Romans 16:16 and other texts). As the ministers and deacons (and frequently laymen) meet each other at the service each one kisses the other on the cheek. The kiss is intended to exemplify Christian love and fellowship. Christian Funk relates^{7a} how the church leaders denied him the kiss during the controversy with them at the time of the Revolutionary War.

Article XVII of the Dortrecht Confession of Faith (1632) teaches the "shunning" of those who are expelled from the congregation (I Cor. 5:9-11; Titus 3:10, 11; etc.). This is no longer observed among the Franconia Mennonites; although they admit only those in religious fellowship with them to partake of the Lord's Supper. But in Christian Funk's time bishops and brethren refused even to eat an ordinary meal when the expelled Funk was seated at the table.^{7b} Christian's father, Henry Funk, taught shunning.^{7c}

^{7a} *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

^{7b} *Ibid.*, p. 21.

^{7c} Henry Funk, *Restitution or an Explanation of Several Principal Points of the Law* (translated from the German), Elkhart, Indiana, 1915; pp. 240-241.

The order of the regular Sunday worship service has changed very little apart from the language change.^{7d} After the singing of one or more hymns, the minister "lined" a hymn. That is to say, he arose and read a part of a stanza, usually in a formal monotone, which the congregation then sang. When they had sung what the minister had read, he read another portion of the stanza, which was then sung. Thus the whole hymn was sung. This custom probably arose from a scarcity of hymnbooks. It is only in recent years that this custom is disappearing. The Franconia Mennonites do not have musical instruments in their meetinghouses. Choirs are also forbidden. Choristers lead the entire congregation in the singing of all hymns.

After the singing had ceased the deacon used to remain seated while he read a chapter of Scripture. Today he rises to read. After another hymn one of the ministers rises and makes the "Opening"—gives a short address and concludes by asking the congregation to kneel in silent prayer. After prayer another minister takes a text and preaches a sermon. The amount of preparation varies. It is said that Bishop Josiah Clemmer used to have an outline in mind,—in fact he mentally attached the several parts to doors and windows of the meetinghouse so he could preach a better sermon. At the same time many ministers do very little specific preparation for any given message, they wait for a text to impress itself upon their minds and then speak extemporaneously—as they feel led. After the minister is again seated the other ministers and deacons (remaining seated) "bear testimony" that the message was in accord with the Word of God. The congregation again kneels while one of the ministers leads in audible prayer which he always concludes with the Lord's Prayer. After a closing hymn one of the preachers makes the necessary announcements, and if a stranger has preached the sermon, his name is announced to the congregation. (If a member of the congregation is to be married, due announcement is still made to the meeting). The minister then folds his hands and pronounces the benediction over a seated audience. (Some congregations now rise). He then says "Depart in peace," and the congregation is dismissed. In most congregations church services are now held every two weeks in the morning and once a month in the evening.

It appears that until a generation or so ago what is now the Skippack bishop district was the only one which observed Feet Washing—a literal observance of John 13. Preacher Henry Bower (originally of Coventry) of the Salford meeting was one of the most active men in arousing conviction for the literal observance of the ordinance. Since 1900 its observance has made rapid progress and it appears that in a few decades all the Franconia Mennonites will practice this ordinance. It is observed at the Preparatory Service held the day before Communion, a Saturday.

The first meetinghouses were log buildings, but very early in the history of the conference stone structures were erected. These buildings, which were of a simple, dignified, architectural design, usually served both school and church purposes. Later separate buildings were erected, and today

^{7d} When the old men of today were boys, Mennonite preachers who preached in English were very rare and were rather frowned upon. There are now only three German preachers in the entire conference, Jonas Mininger, A. G. Clemmer, and A. Z. Derstine, all above sixty-nine years of age.

schoolhouse, meetinghouse, and burying ground are often situated very close to each other. (Formerly, interments were always made with the feet facing the East. Now, roads, cemetery walls, and the like are taken into consideration). All the meetinghouses erected since 1900, and a few erected prior to that date, have large porches across the entrance end. All the meetinghouses are of a severely plain appearance, wholly unadorned. There are no steeples, bells, stained glass windows, or needless ornamentations. Several of the meetinghouses are very beautiful in their simplicity, particularly those in which old-fashioned white-enameled woodwork has been retained.

The furniture in the meetinghouses is also very simple. The first benches were backless, usually elevated as distance from the pulpit increased. Later a single board was added as a back. Long boards studded with pegs on which to hang hats were suspended from the ceiling over the benches, so that it was possible to hang the hat overhead as one sat down to occupy the bench. The ancient custom of seating women in one part of the house and men in another part is still strictly adhered to. Families do not sit together. In earlier days the women sat in the center section of seats while the men sat on the raised seats surrounding the center section. Stoves were early placed in the meetinghouses. The Alms Book of the Skippack congregation, which contains regular financial notes back to 1738, records the purchase of a stove (iron plates erected by a mason) in 1747. The Worcester meetinghouse, erected about 1804, had an open fireplace.

Clocks have been placed in the meetinghouses of the Franconia Conference within the last two or three decades. Prior to this generation little attention was paid to the length of the service. In 1839 a Mennonite minister of near Buffalo, New York, Jacob Krehbiel, preached in the Franconia churches. He later wrote an account of American Mennonitism for his European friends and among other things told of his visit of 1839.^{7e} Incidentally his description of a typical service shows that very few changes have been made in the order of the regular church service during the last century. When Krehbiel preached at Skippack Bishop John Hunsicker preached the "Opening" at the request of Krehbiel. Krehbiel then followed with the main sermon. After Krehbiel was again seated Hunsicker remarked to him that he had preached about an hour. Hunsicker's remark astonished Krehbiel, who asked how he knew that. Hunsicker explained that he had glanced at his watch. He added that most of the preachers usually spoke about an hour. The sermons of 1937 are generally a bit shorter!

Evening services have been started in most of the churches during the last forty years. In 1893 Conference granted Deacon Henry Krupp the privilege of having evening services at the Souderton meeting on Christmas and Thanksgiving days, and when services could be arranged for visiting ministers. The meetinghouses were at first usually equipped for this purpose with kerosene lights; today most of them have electric lights. But two of the largest congregations in the Conference (Deep Run and Franconia) still have no evening services, and are not equipped with lights.

^{7e} "A Few Words About the Mennonites in America in 1841: A Contemporary Document by Jacob Krehbiel," Translated and Edited by Dr. Harold S. Bender, January, 1932 and April, 1932 issues of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

In the Lancaster Conference much contention was occasioned by the introduction of pulpits to displace the old tables around which the ministers and choristers used to sit. Christian Funk mentions the table⁸ in one place but elsewhere⁹ he speaks of the "Lehrstuhl," which probably means a pulpit.¹⁰ There seems to have been no objection to pulpits in the Franconia meetinghouses. Today the pulpits are elevated and the bench behind the pulpit is usually long enough to accommodate six or eight men. Sometimes trustees or old men used to sit on the pulpit when the meetinghouse was crowded. Some ministers still take a small child with them on the pulpit. The desk usually extends the entire width of the pulpit, which usually occupies the entire space between the two entrance doors at one end of the building, from ten to fifteen feet.

Visiting ministers of other denominations were often invited to participate in the services. At the opening of the new Rockhill meetinghouse in 1838 a Reformed minister, John Andrew Strassburger, preached a sermon. And these pleasant relations were then no innovation! For in 1749 Preacher Martin Kolb of Skippack preached the funeral sermon of a Reformed minister, John Philip Boehm.

One inspiring custom of the Franconia Mennonites, hallowed by long observance is the observance of "Harvest-Home" services. These meetings are held in all the meetinghouses in the fall of each year to commemorate the ingathering of the harvest and "to remember the Lord of harvest in thanksgiving." Texts are usually selected from the Old Testament and considerable attention is devoted to the promises of material prosperity given to the Israelites in Canaan if they would truly serve the Lord. Warnings are sounded against apostasy and the example of the apostate Hebrews is pointed out. The meetings are usually held on Saturday afternoon, and ordained men from many congregations are present at all the Harvest-Home meetings. In general the members are very conscientious about attending at least one such service each year.

The bishops, ministers, and deacons of the Franconia Conference do not choose their own offices. When a minister or deacon is to be ordained Conference grants permission to the congregation for the ordination to take place. Announcement of the proposed ordination is made to the congregation who vote as to whether they are in favor of ordaining. If both Conference and congregation vote in the affirmative, announcement is made to the congregation that votes may be cast for men to fill the office. Votes are usually cast by a personal report of each one voting at the house of the deacon. At a set date the names of qualified brethren who received votes are read to the congregation. A few days later an ordination service is held.

Many of the ordained men of Conference and a great crowd of visiting lay members usually assemble for the service. After a period of singing one of the bishops calls upon a deacon to read Luke 10. The service then

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰ In the Pennsylvania German dialect of today a pulpit is called a "Prediger-Stuhl."

proceeds much as the regular service, the sermon of course being appropriate to the occasion. During the service the brethren who have received votes sit on the front bench of the "men's side" and their wives occupy the front bench of the "women's side." On the desk of the pulpit stand as many books (all alike) as there are men in the lot. At the conclusion of the sermon a bishop gives the books and the same number of slips of paper to several ministers or deacons who (often retire into an anteroom to) place a slip in each book. All the slips are blank except one on which is written Proverbs 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The books are then returned to the bishop (who may rearrange them) who places them on the desk of the pulpit. The entire congregation kneels as the bishop prays that God's will may be ascertained as to which one of these brethren He has chosen for the office. After the prayer each man in the lot goes forward and takes a book. (Hymnbooks are used for the ceremony; formerly the old German *Zions Harfe*, now often the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*.) Then each returns his book to the bishop who opens it and examines the slip of paper in it. The slip on which the verse is written is the lot, and the man in whose book it is found is considered called of God and is consequently ordained with the laying-on of hands. The service is very impressive and there is considerable tension during the time the bishop is opening the books.

Any brother in good standing, who is judged to be biblically qualified, is considered eligible for the ministry or to become a deacon. Ministers are eligible to become bishops. In the pioneer days there may have been bishop-deacons.¹¹ All three offices are filled by voting and the use of the lot as described above. (In the case of the ordination of a bishop, two bishops join in laying their hands upon the chosen one). The essential point is that the minister is chosen out of the congregation, no previous training, or even conviction, being considered necessary. He then serves the congregation without any stipulated support.

Should only one candidate receive votes he is ordained without the use of the lot, but this is rare. The first ministers and deacons at Germantown received their offices by voting. It may be that there were no scattered votes and no lot was used. At least there is no mention in the records as to the use of the lot. Christian Funk describes his ordination as bishop; and states that a lot was used (1769).^{11a} And when the Bucks county emigrants to Ontario wrote to the ministers of the Deep Run congregation as to advice in the choosing of officials for their Canadian congregation the Deep Run officials wrote them under date of September 4, 1801 and advised them to ordain men through voting and the use of the lot.¹²

The Germantown Mennonites were craftsmen, mostly weavers, and these early settlers of the Dutch Mennonite branch of the church left their impress upon the Conference. But the bulk of the Franconia Mennonites

¹¹ Funk: *op. cit.*, p. 6, calls Christian Meyer a "bestaeter aeltester."

^{11a} *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

¹² *Briefe an die Mennonisten Gemeinde in Ober Canada. Mit eine Zugabe.* Berlin (now Kitchener), 1840.



A Sketch

were Palatines of Swiss origin and practically all farmers. Many have since gone into the market business, and into the trades. In recent years professions, such as teaching and medicine, are calling some Mennonites. The development of industrialism in modern American life has not left the Mennonites untouched, and with entrance of the women into the factories, and the men into the trades and professions, life is becoming more complex. The simplicity of the forefathers' manner of life is somewhat disappearing. Nevertheless the Mennonite folk have retained enough denominational individuality to call forth a few years ago the following editorial from Mr. Elwood Moser of the *Collegeville* (Pa.) *Independent*:

RELIGION IN CONTRAST

"Last Sunday at the old Mennonite meetinghouse, near Yerkes,¹³ I attended the funeral of John H. Longacre, of Upper Providence, aged 92 years and 9 months. He was a friend of mine for more than fifty years. He lived an unusually long life—a life of usefulness, and had many friends. The services? Very simple. The passing of fifty years revealed only minor changes in the plain edifice with one story, unadorned by any of the furnishings of modern churches. The speakers gave of their best religious thought, confining themselves to Scripture passages, literally accepted, and minus complex interpretations. The vocal music, without organ accompaniment, impressed me with its subdued, rhythmic melody. One of the hymns was familiar to me more than sixty years ago. And the memories it revived! While I sat and saw and listened I did some thinking, since I do a little thinking, occasionally. Here was religion in striking contrast to the modernizations of religion. No lofty spire surmounting a costly edifice imposing in size and architecture; no interior adornments indicating the lavish expenditure of money; no massive pipe organ or surpliced choir and paid organist and choir vocalists. The contrast impelled wondering; and I wondered. Yes, I wondered where Jesus Christ, the lowly Nazarene—were He to return to this planet—would 'go to church' to recognize, if possible, His present professing earthly disciples? Would the changes and transformations in religious habits and conformities wrought in 1,929 years daze and bewilder the ancient teacher of Galilee? Where would recognition be most probable? My good religious friends of all denominations may wonder, if they will, and draw their own conclusions. That's fair, isn't it? Anyhow, what's the philosophy of the picture drawn in religion in contrast? First—evolution—change—(eternal change) pertains to all organic life, including all human activities—imagination, religious beliefs, thoughts, habits, and so forth. Second—the conclusion: The Mennonites have not evolved as far away from the simplicity of Christ as have those of a great majority of religious organizations. The religion of the Mennonites appears to meet their religious needs"

¹³ Providence.

When a Franconia Conference Mennonite dies the members of his immediate family usually worship at the meetinghouse of the deceased on the Sunday following the funeral. After the service they visit the grave in a group.

Chapter IV

THE BISHOP DISTRICTS

There are three groups of ordained men in the Franconia Mennonite Conference: bishops, ministers, and deacons. All are ordained by voting, and the casting of lots in case more than one brother receives votes. The cases are rare when only one man receives votes so that it is usually stated that Mennonites ordain by lot.

The central idea in the Mennonite system is that the ministry is not a salaried profession. A higher education, it is said, is not essential for the presentation of the simple Gospel message preached by the Apostle Paul. Attention is often called to the fact that in the Apostolic Church the "elders ordained in every church" were apparently men without scholastic preparation. Mennonite ministers preach the Gospel and also do some pastoral work such as visiting the sick. Yet Mennonite ministers are "preachers" rather than "pastors." The lay members read the Bible for themselves and in a measure "stand on their own feet." The Gospel is preached in simplicity, not in rhetorical skill.¹ Therefore when there is need of an ordained man, a qualified² layman is promptly chosen for the work. The term of office is for life and its acceptance is considered obligatory. No stipulated salary is paid; ministers continue to earn their own living as they did before ordination.

Deacons have charge of the alms work of the church and share in its government. Discipline in the Franconia Conference is chiefly in the hands of the bishops and the deacons. The deacons always read the Scripture lesson.

In addition to the deacons and the ministers there are five bishops in the Franconia Conference. A bishop is a minister with full power to marry, baptize, and administer communion. In addition he has the general spiritual oversight of a number of congregations. The congregations over which any given bishop has the oversight constitute his "bishop district."

Ministers and deacons are ordained from among the laity—in the German it was customary to speak of "choosing" a minister or deacon. A bishop was a "confirmed" minister. In the Pennsylvania German dialect a bishop is often called a "full" minister, meaning a minister with full power to perform the duties of a bishop.

It is quite probable that a number of years were required for the bishop districts to assume a permanent form. Perhaps the earliest classification of the churches of the Franconia Conference into bishop districts is in the

¹ Compare I Corinthians 2:4.

² Many Mennonites see the need of a better trained ministry to meet the needs of a better educated laity but in the Franconia Conference this is taken care of by voting for better qualified individuals, not by discarding the use of the lot.

1773 letter to Europe,³ where the following districts are catalogued, Skippack, Franconia, Deep Run, Swamp, and Schuylkill. Let us look briefly at each one of these districts.

The first district was said⁴ in 1773 to be composed of Skippack, Germantown, and Methacton (Worcester). Providence was very likely overlooked by mistake or considered a mere branch of Skippack.⁵ In 1818 Schwenksville was added to the group but was lost in the division of 1847. The Germantown congregational organization also collapsed about that time. This is the only district in the Conference where the "circuit-system" has been retained—that is, a number of ministers are jointly responsible for the services at a number of churches. The congregations in this circuit are Skippack, Worcester, and Providence. In 1909 Coventry and Vincent were added to the district because those congregations desired an English bishop. Services were discontinued at Coventry in 1914. Upon the death of Andrew S. Mack in 1917 Boyertown and Hereford were also added to the district; the district then consisted of Skippack, Worcester, Providence, Vincent, Hereford, and Boyertown. The total membership of the Skippack bishop district is now (1937) less than 500.

Following is a list of all the bishops known to have served in the Skippack district:

JACOB GODSHALK, c. 1670-1763.⁶

Ordained as preacher at Germantown, October 8, 1702; began to officiate as bishop in 1708—the first American Mennonite bishop.

ANDREW ZIEGLER, c. 1707-1797.

Ordained as preacher, 1746; as bishop, May 30, 1762.⁷

HENRY HUNSICKER, 1752-1836.

Ordained as preacher about 1782, and as bishop soon afterwards.⁸

JOHN HUNSICKER, 1773-1847.

Preached almost forty years; was the senior bishop of the entire Conference in 1847; he seceded with Oberholtzer in 1847.⁹

ABRAHAM WISMER, 1797-1877.

Ordained as preacher in 1838; as bishop in 1852.

JOHN B. HUNSBERRY, 1821-1898.

Ordained as preacher in 1863; as bishop in 1877.

WARREN G. BEAN, 1866.

Ordained as preacher, June 15, 1897; as bishop November 16, 1909. There was no bishop in the district from 1898-1909.

³ This letter is to be found in the Appendix.

⁴ All names taken from the 1773 letter are modernized.

⁵ All congregational histories are found in Part II; it seems that there was a Providence congregation long before 1773.

⁶ The abbreviation, c., means "about."

⁷ See the 1773 letter in the Appendix.

⁸ *Hunsicker Family History*, pp. 21-24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 26.

The second bishop district in the 1773 letter is the Franconia district. The 1773 letter mentions "(Franconia), Plain, Salford, Rockhill, and Schwamin (?)." But Christian Funk speaks of "the six congregations" already in the period of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783).¹⁰ These congregations were likely Franconia, Plain, Salford, Rockhill, Lexington, and Towamencin. This is the largest district of the Conference. And it is very compact; all these meetinghouses are within a ten-mile radius of the Franconia meetinghouse. No congregation in the Franconia bishop district has become extinct. In 1879 the Souderton meetinghouse was erected. And within a few years after the death of Bishop Andrew S. Mack, which occurred in 1917, the Swamp and Springfield congregations were added to the Franconia bishop district. (They were a part of the Deep Run district in the interval.)

The congregations now in the Franconia bishop district are, Franconia, Plain, Salford, Rockhill, Lexington, Towamencin, Souderton, Swamp, and Springfield. The total membership of these nine congregations is upwards of 2,500—almost sixty per cent of the entire conference.

All ordinations of bishops are performed in the Franconia meetinghouse. It is customary to have two bishops in the district. At the present time the Franconia bishop district has three bishops.

Following is a tabular list of all those known to have served as bishops in the Franconia bishop district. After each man's name follow his dates of birth and death and his congregation.

HENRY FUNK, d. 1760. Salford and Franconia.

Emigrated to America as early as 1719. It is not known how soon he was ordained preacher and bishop. Author of two books, *Spiegel der Tauffe*, 1744, and *Restitution*, 1763.

ISAAC KOLB, 1711-1776. Rockhill (and Plain?).

Ordained as preacher in 1744; as bishop, 1761.¹¹

CHRISTIAN FUNK, 1731-1811. Franconia.

Son of Bishop Henry. Ordained as preacher, 1756;¹² as bishop, 1769. Severed his connection with the Franconia Conference in 1778.¹³

DAVID RUTH, d. 1820. Lexington.

Ordained as a preacher between 1773 and 1796;¹⁴ as bishop by 1804.¹⁵

¹⁰ *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1813, p. 19.

¹¹ 1773 letter.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ See Part V, Chapter I.

¹⁴ He is not mentioned in the catalog in the 1773 letter but in the 1796 letter to Germantown (see appendix) he is scheduled to preach there.

¹⁵ *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, p. 40.

JACOB GOTTSALL, 1769-1845. Franconia.

Ordained as preacher, 1804; as bishop, 1813.¹⁶

JACOB KULP, 1798-1875. Plain.

Ordained as preacher, August 2, 1838; as bishop, December 21, 1843.¹⁷

JOSIAH S. CLEMMER, 1827-1905. Franconia.

Ordained as preacher in November, 1860; as bishop, in December, 1867. A vigorous leader.

SAMUEL LEATHERMAN, 1815-1904. Lexington.

Ordained as preacher, October, 1843; as bishop, June, 1876.

SAMUEL D. DETWEILER, 1841-1917. Rockhill.

Ordained as preacher in 1876; as bishop, October 29, 1896.

JONAS MININGER, 1852- . Plain.

Ordained as preacher, May 30, 1895; as bishop, October 24, 1905. Senior bishop of the Conference since 1921.

ABRAHAM G. CLEMMER, 1867- . Franconia.

Ordained as preacher, June 2, 1904; as bishop, November 20, 1913.

JOSEPH G. RUTH, 1857-1928. Lexington.

Ordained as preacher, October 24, 1905; as bishop, February 25, 1926. Ordained to assist Bishops Mininger and Clemmer but served less than three years.

ARTHUR D. RUTH, 1892- . Lexington.

Nephew of Bishop Joseph G. Ruth. Ordained as preacher, November 27, 1923; as bishop, May 29, 1929.

The third bishop district of the Franconia Conference consists of the Blooming Glen, Deep Run, and Doylestown congregations. Services are held in the Plumstead and Perkasio meetinghouses but there are no organized congregations at these places. The total membership of this bishop district is upwards of 1,200. All ordinations of bishops are performed in the Blooming Glen meetinghouse but the "small conference"^{17a} (to arrange communion dates, etc.) is held in the Deep Run meetinghouse. Following the death of Bishop Andrew S. Mack in 1917 the Swamp and Springfield congregations were added to this bishop district but a few years later they were transferred to the Franconia bishop district.

Following is a list of bishops known to have served in the Deep Run-Blooming Glen-Doylestown bishop district.

ABRAHAM SWARTZ, - . Deep Run.

Ordained as preacher in 1738 and as bishop in 1756.¹⁸ There is a tradition that he became blind as an old man but continued to preach.

JACOB GROSS, c. 1743-1810. Deep Run.

Ordained as preacher between 1773 and 1796,¹⁴ as bishop by 1804.¹⁵

¹⁶ Bishop A. G. Clemmer submitted this data.

¹⁷ *Kulp Family History*, p. 443.

^{17a} Of the bishop district.

¹⁸ 1773 letter.

HENRY HUNSBERGER, 1768-1854, Blooming Glen.

Ordained preacher in 1807. He must have been ordained as bishop soon afterwards for he was the moderator of the October, 1847 session of Conference.¹⁹ (The senior bishop, John Hunsicker, did not preside; Hunsberger was evidently bishop the second-longest period of time.)

ISAAC GODSHALK, 1787-1852. Doylestown.

The dates of his ordination are lost, but he is known to have been a bishop.²⁰

ISAAC OBERHOLTZER, 1815-1887. Blooming Glen.

Ordained as preacher about 1847; as bishop, about 1853.

SAMUEL G. GROSS, 1839-1895. Doylestown.

Ordained as preacher, November 13, 1866; as bishop, November 1, 1883.

HENRY B. ROSENBERGER, 1844-1921. Blooming Glen.

Ordained as preacher, October 27, 1885; as bishop, November 21, 1895.

PETER B. LOUX, 1847-1922. Blooming Glen.

Ordained as preacher, June 9, 1896; as bishop, September 16, 1919 at the age of seventy-one.

ABRAHAM O. HISTAND, 1869- . Doylestown.

Ordained as preacher, November 11, 1896; as bishop, April 11, 1922.

Prior to 1847 there was a Swamp bishop district in the Franconia Conference.²¹ The congregations in the Swamp district at that time were, East Swamp, West Swamp, Upper Milford, Saucon, Springfield, and Flatland.²² Earlier the district had included the Siegfried meetinghouse in what is now the borough of Northampton, the Settlement meetinghouse in Allen township, Northampton county, the Mount Bethel meetinghouse in what is now Bangor, and the Rothrock meetinghouse in Washington township, Northampton county.²³ The Mennonites and Dunkards had also united in the erection of a meetinghouse near Hellertown, Pennsylvania.²³

In 1847 so many Swamp district Mennonites followed John H. Oberholtzer in his secession from the Franconia Conference that the Swamp bishop district of the Franconia Conference disintegrated as a district. The last Franconia Conference bishop of the Swamp district died in 1859. There may have been a period of indecision following his death, or the Swamp, Springfield, and Saucon Mennonites may have, for a few years, been considered a part of the Blooming Glen bishop district. For Jacob

¹⁹ Testimony given in the Berks County Court about 1878 in the Mennonite litigation concerning property rights at Boyertown.

²⁰ Consult the Index.

²¹ For the congregations in the Swamp district before the Revolutionary War see the 1773 letter (in the Appendix).

²² Flatland had only been added to the district in 1837.

²³ See the congregational histories in Part II.

Y. Moyer,²⁴ aged eighty years, of the Springfield congregation, states that he remembers Bishop Isaac Oberholtzer of Blooming Glen serving communion at Springfield, when he was a boy. But eventually the Swamp, Springfield, and Saucon congregations were added to the Hereford-Schuylkill bishop district. By 1900 the last Franconia Conference Mennonite of the Saucon congregation had died.

Following is a list of the known bishops who served in the Swamp bishop district:

VALENTINE CLEMMER.²⁵

Emigrated to America as a bishop in 1717. Died while visiting the Conestoga Mennonites concerning church affairs and was buried there, perhaps at Mellingers' cemetery.²⁶ Subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith in 1725 as from "Great-Swamp."

JACOB MEYER, 1721-1790. Saucon.

Ordained as preacher in 1752; as bishop, 1763.²⁷

PHILIP GEISINGER.²⁸

Ordained as preacher and bishop between 1773 and 1778.²⁹

SAMUEL MUSSELMAN,³⁰ 1764-1842. Springfield.

The dates of his ordination are not known.

JACOB Y. MOYER,³¹ 1791-1859. Springfield.

Ordained as preacher in 1826.³² The date of his ordination as bishop is not known.

The fifth bishop district mentioned in the 1773 letter is "Schulkiel." The Hereford congregation is overlooked in the list unless it is included in the Schuylkill group. If Hereford is overlooked, Schuylkill likely meant Coventry, Vincent, and Phoenixville. But if Hereford is included, Schuylkill likely meant Hereford, Coventry, and Vincent—Phoenixville had only been established in 1772.

In 1725 Daniel Langenecker and Jacob Beghtly (Bechtel) subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. They represented the "Manatant"

²⁴ A grandson of the last Franconia Conference bishop of the Swamp district.

²⁵ Also Felte, or Velte Klemmer. See the 1773 letter (in the Appendix).

²⁶ Family tradition reported by Bishop A. G. Clemmer.

²⁷ 1773 letter (which *vide* in the Appendix).

²⁸ Christian Funk, *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, pp. 21, 31. His bishop district is unknown. His placement here is a conjecture based on the fact that the Geisingers settled chiefly in northern Bucks county; and that Christian Funk by chance met Geisinger and Bishop Jacob Meyer of Saucon in Easton, Pennsylvania, on one occasion.

²⁹ He is not listed in the 1773 letter but as mentioned by Christian Funk as a bishop in 1778. *Spiegel*, p. 31.

³⁰ 1896 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*.

³¹ His grandson, Jacob Y. Moyer of the Springfield congregation, says he was a bishop.

³² His tombstone states, "Er diente als Prediger der Mennonitten 33 Jahren" (Springfield cemetery).

—a region extending southward through the eastern end of Berks county and evidently including the Coventry and Vincent Mennonites (of Chester county). Langenecker bought a few hundred acres near Royersford (Mingo) in 1733. He was a trustee of the Coventry church property in 1750. (Hans) Jacob Bechtel bought 366 acres³³ about two miles north-east of the present borough of Pottstown in 1720.

It therefore seems reasonable to believe that Schuylkill-Hereford was one bishop district. Besides the terms "Schulkiel" and "Manatant" indicating this grouping, and besides the fact that as far back as any one remembers the Chester and Berks county Mennonites were in one bishop district there is additional evidence. John S. Kriebel, the senior minister of the Hereford congregation, has in his possession a six-volume German commentary which was given him by the late Bishop Andrew S. Mack of Hereford. On the inside of the back cover of volume one is written,

Christian Biery	Prediger
Jacob Latschaw	Prediger
Andrew Mack	Prediger

Christian Beary (1769-1832) and Jacob Latshaw (1796-1867) were both Chester county preachers. Beary is buried at Coventry, and Latshaw at Vincent. The fact that these books were passed on to Mack and to Kriebel suggests that the Chester and Berks county congregations were considered one district.

A number of congregations in this district have disintegrated. In Chester county Phoenixville, Charlestown, Diamond Rock, and Coventry have been abandoned by the Mennonites.³⁴ In 1847 the active congregations of the district were Vincent, Coventry, Hereford, and Boyertown.³⁵ Some years later Swamp and Springfield were added to the district. In 1909 Vincent and Coventry were transferred to the Skippack bishop district. This left Hereford, Boyertown, Swamp, and Springfield in the bishop district of A. S. Mack. When Bishop Mack died in 1917 there was a general feeling that it was not advisable to ordain a bishop in the district at that time. Consequently the Hereford and Boyertown congregations were transferred to Bishop Bean's district (Skippack) and Bishop Henry Rosenberger of Blooming Glen assumed the oversight of Swamp and Springfield.

Those known to have served as bishops in the Chester-Berks district are as follows:

MARTIN BECHTEL, 1710-1786. Coventry.

Ordained as preacher in 1739; as bishop, 1758.³⁶

³³ Now the "Ringing Rocks Park."

³⁴ See the congregational histories in Part II. It is quite interesting and encouraging to know that in 1936 the Mennonites started a mission Sunday school in Phoenixville.

³⁵ No communion is served at Boyertown. Hereford-Boyertown is really one congregation.

³⁶ 1773 letter.

MATTHIAS PANNEBECKER, 1742-1808. Phoenixville.

His ordination dates are not known.

JOHN BECHTEL, d. 1795. Hereford.

Served as a bishop,³⁷ but dates unknown.

JOHN C. BECHTEL, 1779-1843. Hereford.

Ordained as preacher, 1816; as bishop, 1830.

ABRAHAM HALDEMAN, 1780-1865. Vincent.³⁸

Ordained as preacher, 1830; as bishop some years later. Moved to Juniata county, Pennsylvania, in 1842.

JOHN B. LATSHAW, 1804-1878. Coventry.³⁸

Preached forty-four years; was a bishop by 1852.

ANDREW S. MACK, 1836-1917, Hereford.

Ordained as preacher, September 15, 1863; as bishop, November 6, 1875.³⁹ A great leader.

It is altogether likely that a number of Franconia Conference bishops are not listed in this chapter. For example, Christian Funk says that from 1778 to 1806 ten confirmed ministers died and six were ordained in their places.⁴⁰ Evidently a number of ministers were "confirmed" (ordained as bishops) whose history is not recorded.

In 1773 there were five bishop districts in the Franconia Conference with twenty-four preachers and bishops. Today (1937) there are three bishop districts with thirty-seven preachers and bishops, and eighteen deacons.

The greater part of the modern mission stations and Sunday schools are in the Franconia bishop district. Bishops Mininger, Clemmer, and Ruth have the oversight of the following stations: Finland, Lansdale, Perkiomenville, Rocky Ridge, and Spring Mount. Bishop Bean has the oversight of the following mission stations and Sunday schools: Norristown, Pottstown, and Phoenixville. Bishop Histand has the oversight of the Perkasio, Plumstead, and Gardenville Sunday schools, though these three are not under the care of the Mission Board.

³⁷ According to Mary L. Bower, Boyertown, Pennsylvania.

³⁸ The same ministers served Vincent and Coventry. The name of the congregation given usually indicates the place of burial.

³⁹ According to Bishop Noah H. Mack, son of A. S. Mack, Bishop John B. Latshaw desired the ordination of Andrew S. Mack as his successor as bishop. Conference granted Latshaw the privilege to ordain Mack. But Isaac Rickert, a good friend of Mack did not vote. When asked, he told Mack, "That might make you trouble." So Mack refused to be ordained in that manner. However, when votes were taken he was the only man receiving votes and was consequently ordained without the use of the lot.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 45, ". . . bis zehn von ihren bestaeten Dienern gestorben und sechs in ihren Platz gestellt waren. . . ."

Chapter V

THE SEMIANNUAL MEETING OF CONFERENCE

The first known American Mennonite Conference was convened as a special meeting to select a suitable Confession of Faith to present in an English translation to the American colonists. Both the Skippack¹ and Conestoga² Mennonite settlements were represented. There is a local tradition among the Hereford Mennonites that an early conference was held at Hereford, but a positive identification with this first conference cannot be made. The date of this first conference is probably 1725. The ministers present, many of whom were bishops, subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith, including an appendix and "Menno's Excusation," as being "... according to our Opinion; and also, have took the same to be wholly ours"³ This Confession of Faith was not printed until 1727. Hence many have erroneously concluded that the conference was held in 1727. But the second title page (of the Appendix) of the Confession states that the appendix was "Published Formerly in the Low-Dutch, and translated out of the same into High-Dutch, and out of that into the English Language, 1725." The conference must therefore have been held in 1725.

Yet this cannot be taken as the beginning of the present semiannual sessions of the Franconia Conference. The 1725 conference was a special meeting to select a Confession of Faith.

References are sometimes made to a 1742 conference. In that year Count Zinzendorf, a Moravian, arranged a three-day conference of representatives of the numerous German sects in southeastern Pennsylvania.⁴ The purpose of the conference was to merge all these sects into one denomination. Mennonites were invited to attend. The conference was, of course, a failure. "But what a dream to bring Germantown Baptists [Dunkards], Skippack Mennonites, Perkiomen Schwenkfelders, Ephrata Monastics, Philadelphia Quakers, Tulpehocken Lutherans, and Bethlehem Moravians under one synodic roof—and one denomination!"⁵

¹ Now the Franconia Conference.

² Now the Lancaster Conference.

³ *The Christian Confession of Faith of the Harmless Christians, in the Netherlands, known by the name of Mennonists*, Amsterdam. Printed, Re-printed and Sold by Andrew Bradford in Philadelphia, in the year, 1727.

⁴ Benjamin Franklin published the proceedings of this 1742 Oley Conference, *Zuverlässige Beschreibung Der Dritten Conferenz Der Evangelischen Religionen Teutscher Nation In Pennsylvania, Welche am 9.10. und 11 ten Februarii 1742 In Oley an Johann De Turcks Hause gehalten worden; Samt Denen dieses mahl verfassten Gemein-Schlussen*. (From a photostatic reproduction in Croll, *Annals*, p. 42); see also the *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania German Society*, Volume XLI (1930), "Colonial Architecture of the Pennsylvania German," by G. Edwin Brumbaugh, p. 40; also P. C. Croll, D.D., *Annals of the Oley Valley in Berks County, Pa.*, Reading, Pa., 1926, pp. 15, 16, 41-45; also I. Daniel Rupp, *History of the Counties of Berks and Lebanon*, Lancaster, Pa., 1844, pp. 235-238.

⁵ Croll, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

The most important published source of information on the early religious practice of the Franconia Conference Mennonites is the fifty-four page polemic⁶ of Bishop Christian Funk, written in 1809. Funk mentions a conference which was held the first Thursday in May in 1806.⁷ This is the regular day for the meeting of the spring conference! It seems reasonable therefore on the basis of that statement to conclude that the present conference met as early as 1806. But Funk has more information. He also refers to a conference held in May, 1805.⁸ And in a speech Funk made at the May, 1806 session of conference he referred to the conference held a year previous (1805) and called it a "great conference."⁹ The semiannual conference is still referred to as the "gross Rath"—the "great conference." This expression of Funk is quite significant, for he uses the same expression in referring to a meeting which was held between 1761 and 1769.

Funk's story is as follows.¹⁰ He was born in 1731. In 1751 he was married and continued to live with his father, Bishop Henry Funk. About the year 1757¹¹ he was ordained to the ministry by his father. In 1760 his father died. Christian Meyer was the confirmed deacon¹² at that time. Isaac Kolb was then chosen as bishop.¹³ Soon Kolb and Meyer were quite at variance and much trouble was made. But Kolb said in anger, in a great conference of ministers and deacons,¹⁴ "I will not serve any longer with Christian Meyer, for he made old Funk so much trouble." That was very distressing to Meyer and displeased the ministers and the church. The "strange" ministers¹⁵ perhaps stood with Kolb. Meyer had to bear it.

Funk then goes on to relate that the "strange" ministers came soon and desired to ordain a bishop. Meyer opposed this step but his wife finally persuaded him to yield. Two men then received votes, Samuel Bechtel (of Rockhill) and Christian Funk (of Franconia). The lot was cast and it fell on Christian Funk who was promptly "confirmed," that is, ordained bishop.¹⁶

The "great conference" described above therefore was held between 1761 and 1769. Funk, as was stated above, wrote this in 1809 when regular conference sessions were known. And he writes of this conference of

⁶ *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1813.

⁷ "... eine Zusammenkunft der Diener den ersten Donnerstag im May . . ." *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45. This is in distinction from the "small" conference of the ministers and deacons of each bishop district who arrange the dates for the observance of the annual communion services in the several churches of the districts.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

¹¹ This was written in 1809. In 1773 he wrote that he was ordained in 1756. (See Appendix.)

¹² "Bestäter Aeltester",—bestaeter usually is used of ministers and then means "bishops."

¹³ Kolb was ordained bishop in 1761.

¹⁴ "... einer grossen Zusammenkunft von Dienern und Aeltesten . . ." Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Those not of Kolb's bishop district.

¹⁶ Funk was ordained bishop in 1769.

the 1760's in a perfectly casual manner. It cannot be disputed that the Franconia Conference was in session about one hundred seventy years ago!

Again Funk speaks of the abuse heaped upon him at a "great conference" held during the Revolutionary War.¹⁷

Funk also speaks of a conference of all the ministers and deacons of the six congregations¹⁸ and forty brethren from his congregation—a total of sixty.¹⁹ But this particular meeting was a special meeting to discipline Funk; the war was still in progress. After the war was over²⁰ various personal charges were preferred against Funk. Another conference was held, this time of twenty-nine ministers and deacons.²¹ But this was also a special meeting to consider Funk's case and has no connection with the establishment of a semiannual meeting of conference.

The evidence thus far produced proves that "great conferences" were held at least once between 1761 and 1769, and again in 1805 and in 1806. And it seems reasonable to conclude that "great conferences" were held regularly before Christian Funk was ordained bishop (1769).

The question remains, Where were these conferences held? There is a tradition that conference used to meet at Skippack. Skippack was the home of the leading men of the district prior to 1750. And the district was often called Skippack. Christian Funk refers to his conference as "Skip-pack."²² He calls the Lancaster Conference, "Conestoga."²³ But this is not conclusive proof. The names Skippack and Conestoga are reminiscent of the original settlements and do not indicate the meetinghouse in which regular conferences later came to be held.

Once again Christian Funk is helpful. It is quite well established that Funk was a member of the Franconia congregation. In his *Spiegel* he is referred to as of the Indian Field congregation.²⁴ Funk reports that a congregational meeting was held in "our meeting"²⁵ in 1778.²⁶ At this meeting the church leaders demanded that Funk take a stand against the declaration of allegiance to the Colonial Government.²⁷ This Funk refused to do. His friends advised him to go home. Yet he was loath to break with the church. He said that he was going to make an acknowledgment to the leaders. His friends strongly objected. He then returned into the (Franconia) meetinghouse and pleaded for forgiveness,²⁸ but was "set back" and

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁸ Probably Franconia, Salford, Towamencin, Rockhill, Lexington, and Plain.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

²⁰ The Revolutionary War ended in 1783.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

²² *Op. cit.*, pp. 39, 45.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 45.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26. That means the Franconia meetinghouse.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21. One cannot prove from this one reference that the congregational meeting was held in 1778 but other evidence in the book establishes that date.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30; all this is a narration of the events which happened at "our meeting"—Franconia; pp. 47, 26ff.

forbidden to preach because he would not oppose the declaration of allegiance. When Funk stood before conference on the first Thursday in May, 1806 he rehearsed the story of his schism from the Mennonite Church. Among other things he told the story of how he was advised to go home (in 1778) but how he nevertheless returned into the meetinghouse and pleaded for forgiveness. Funk said that he had stood "before this door"²⁹ twenty-eight years before "in the night" and said to those about him that he would go in and make an acknowledgment to the ministers. His friends objected but he entered nevertheless and pleaded for forgiveness.

In other words the May, 1806 conference was held in the meetinghouse in which Funk was deposed from the ministry in 1778. And Funk was of the Franconia congregation and was deposed from the ministry in the Franconia meetinghouse. Therefore the Franconia Conference met in the Franconia meetinghouse as early as 1806.

The next known reference to the Franconia Conference is in the diary of John Z. Gehman (1793-1882) of Hereford. Gehman was ordained to the ministry in 1827. He kept a diary from 1829 until his death. On May 5, 1831 he wrote (translated from the German), "Rode to Franconia to Conference."

In 1847 Preacher John H. Oberholtzer (1809-1895) of Swamp led a schism from the Franconia Conference. In 1876 a group of his followers became involved in a lawsuit with a group of Franconia Conference Mennonites concerning property rights in the Boyertown Mennonite meetinghouse. The testimony heard in that case given in 1877 or 1878, is of great historical value. The testimony of several men will here be quoted in part.

John H. Oberholtzer (1809-1895), ordained in 1842, stated, "The Mennonite Church of Eastern Pennsylvania was governed through a general conference. As far as I know they met at Franconia twice a year, May and October. This general conference existed as far as my recollection goes back. It was customary some 60 years ago."³⁰

Isaac Moyer (Meyer) of Deep Run testified, "I belonged to Mennonite church 40 years. I was ordained as minister of the Gospel in 1843. I have been serving as minister since that time, and attended the conference of Franconia with few exceptions, when I was unable to be present on account of funerals. The sessions of conference are held twice a year, May and October. The conference consists of all the bishops, preachers and deacons."³¹

Preacher John B. Bechtel (1807-1889) ordained at Hereford in 1848, stated that conference meets semiannually ". . . at the Franconia meetinghouse. The object of the conference is to keep the congregation[s]

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³⁰ *Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Eastern District—January Term, 1883, Appeal . . . Samuel H. Landis Et Al. vs. Henry H. Borneman Et Al. Paper Book of Appellants.* Reading, Pa., 1883, p. 21.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

together and to promote unity of opinion, and if any trouble arises to consider and adjust them [it]."³²

Summarizing, it is clear that conference met before 1769, and at least by 1806 was meeting regularly in the Franconia meetinghouse. For over a century the sessions have been held semiannually. We are not far wrong in concluding that the conference was established in the first half of the eighteenth century (before 1769) and that it has always met at Franconia.

The nature of these semiannual sessions is clearly understood by those who attend. Bishops, ministers, deacons, and a few visiting laymen attend the semiannual meeting. Laymen are permitted, but not encouraged, to attend. The bishops act as moderators of Conference. The man who has served as bishop for the longest period of time is the senior bishop. The bishops sit on a bench in front of the pulpit, facing the ministers and deacons. The senior bishop rises, makes some opening remarks and asks the group to kneel in silent prayer. After the prayer the senior bishop makes another short address. Each bishop (in the order of seniority) then rises and gives a short talk. Then follows a discussion of the several matters which have come to the attention of the bishops or other members of conference. The last matter is the taking of a rising vote that conference still desires "to continue in the simple and nonresistant faith of Christ." Conference is closed with an audible prayer. Before the group is dismissed the secretary reads his formulation of the decisions of the day, and the members of conference vote their approval.

The semiannual conference meeting is not intended to be inspirational; there is no reading of Scripture, and no sermon. Conference meets for the consideration of the problems, needs, and difficulties with which the several congregations are confronted. Little is done by way of initiating constructive projects for the future. But conference does make an earnest effort to keep the church free from worldliness. If there is any one thing which impresses a visitor at conference it is the grave concern there manifested lest the church become entangled with the world.

Since conference is as it is, it is quite natural that a historical situation lies back of almost every regulation in the printed Conference disciplines. Unfortunately there are no official records of the proceedings of Conference prior to 1907. J. C. Clemens has kept a permanent record of the conference proceedings since 1907. He was appointed the first official secretary in 1909. Indeed the keeping of minutes was one of the propositions of John H. Oberholtzer which conference turned down about 1847. But here and there some members of conference kept minutes for their own satisfaction. The best and oldest records (known) were kept by Preacher Jacob B. Mensch from 1880 to 1907. So continuous minutes for fifty-six years, since 1880, are available.

The matters taken up during these fifty-six years are quite interesting. Some are of great historical value, such as the permissions granted to ordain bishops, ministers, and deacons. Over fifty ordinations are referred to in

³² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

the Mensch minutes. A great many regulations pertain to checking tendencies toward worldliness. Some involve questions of principle, as e. g., whether one who has married a legally divorced person may be received into the congregation; and, Mennonites and military service.

The following list of regulations is selected for their historical value or human interest. After each regulation is found the month and year when the rule was made; as "M 1890" stands for the May, 1890 Conference. "O" represents October.³³

1. Conference reaffirms an earlier resolution that the sisters shall wear caps (devotional coverings based on I Corinthians 11) in the meeting. (M 1880).
2. The brethren shall be admonished against wearing beards (since the world has them); exceptions: beards worn for humility (if the life and walk correspond); or health; and in the case of eczema. In the latter case an explanation shall be made to the congregation. (M 1880).
3. The brethren shall not get too much involved in creamery organizations. (M 1880).
4. Parents shall admonish their children to stay away from "drink-houses" on Sundays. (M 1880).
5. Brethren shall be admonished not to claim the \$300.00 exemption allowed them by law in case of bankruptcy. (M 1881).
6. If a brother has a warrant served on a man he must seek the peace of the one he had arrested before he can be again received as a member of the church. (M 1882).
7. In the case of bankruptcy a member who cannot pay all his debts must, in the company of another brother, seek the peace of his creditors. (M 1882).
8. Brethren shall keep away from taverns for they are for travelers and business people and not for the folks of the community. (M 1882).
9. It appears best for ordained brethren not to take shares in a new bank. (M 1882).
10. It is not appropriate for the sisters to wear gold, etc.; and church members shall stay away from surprise parties. (M 1882).
11. The members shall not dress their children so "stylishly." (M 1883).

³³ The Mensch minutes were originally written in Pennsylvania German. An effort has been made to present in a brief yet careful statement some of the regulations recorded at length by Mensch. The last nine rules are taken verbatim from the minute book of the conference secretary, J. C. Clemens.

Conference has very seldom formally repealed a resolution. As conditions and customs changed, regulations which became obsolete were simply not reaffirmed and were gradually forgotten. Historically when an attempt was made to enforce discipline which involved a change in attitude on the part of a large number of members, patience and love were shown toward offenders. The ministers were instructed by conference to "exhort the members to these ends in love." Resolutions were not strictly enforced, as a general rule, until this could be done without a large number of members being forced from the fellowship of the church.

12. The corpse shall not be taken into the meetinghouse (at funerals) unless the weather is inclement. (M 1883).
13. Sisters shall be received into fellowship, after baptism, by the bishop's wife, or another sister, taking them by the hand and giving them the kiss of charity. (Based on Rom. 16:16, I Pet. 5:14 etc.) (M 1883).
14. (The ministers in preaching) shall lift up their voices, and shall not preach too long. (M 1884).
15. The "Russian" money shall be repaid on a dividend basis (Evidently this refers to money the Russian Mennonite immigrants had borrowed). (O 1884).
16. Conference testifies against the following: photographs; (mourning brethren) keeping on their hats during funeral services; sisters wearing hats, lace, and ruffles; attendance at surprise parties; and mourners sitting "upstairs" at funerals. (O 1884).
17. A brother who has married a legally divorced woman may be received into the communion of the church if his congregation votes unanimously in favor of receiving him. (M 1887).
18. Those who desire to kneel (during prayer) at funeral services may do so. (M 1887).
19. The sisters shall not wear bustles. (M 1887).
20. The Quakers are granted their request to preach in our meetings. (O 1887).
21. Whoever so desires may support the periodicals which are carrying the nonresistant Faith far and wide, namely "Herold der Wahrheit," "Der Rundschau," "Der Himmelsmanna," "Watchful Pilgrim," and "Die Kirche Unterm Kreuz." (O 1887).
22. Conference testifies against putting black attire on the dead. (M 1888).
23. Membership in the "Beneficial Society" (which paid a sick, death, and burial benefit) is not allowed. (M 1888).
24. The Blooming Glen trustees shall take the case with Fretz out of the Supreme Court if possible; if they cannot they must make a confession (to the congregation). (O 1888).
25. If much pressure is exerted upon a minister to preach in a chapel he may do so, but he shall conduct the service as in our own meeting-houses,—without instruments or choir. (M 1891).
26. The sisters shall be admonished against the practise of keeping their (devotional) caps in boxes (at the meetinghouses). (O 1892).
- 26a. Evening meetings are granted the Souderton congregation on Christmas and Thanksgiving Days, and for appointments for visiting ministers. (M 1893).
27. Brethren and sisters shall not attend either the World's Fair at Chicago or the Centennial in Philadelphia. Conference reaffirms its earlier rulings against attending fairs, mass-meetings, political celebrations, etc. (M 1893).
28. It is considered advisable not to attend camp-meetings. (O 1893).

29. The brethren are not permitted to wear mustaches. (M 1894).
30. Members shall not sign temperance pledges, thereby becoming members of Temperance Societies. (M 1894).
31. (All the Conference members except one^{33a} voted against a General Conference.) (O 1894).
32. The brethren shall abstain from partaking of strong drink where groups are shoveling snow, or at barn-raising, or sales, or when attending market; rather may they let their "lights shine." (M 1895).
33. Conference again testifies against all forms of worldliness,—in dress; great worldly conformity in funeral customs: flowers, clothing the dead in black, etc. (O 1895).
34. When a man fails financially his wife shall not sue him for financial claims. (M 1896).
35. It is desirable that the sisters should wear such a bonnet that a devotional covering may be worn under it. Both brethren and sisters shall wear the same attire regardless of where they go. The leaders shall admonish the congregations to these ends in love. (M 1896).
36. Conference again renews former regulations against members uniting with Farmer's Clubs. (O 1898).
37. Whoever desires to contribute to the Philadelphia Mission may do so. (M 1899).
38. The organ must be taken from the (Worcester) meetinghouse or no communion will be administered there. (O 1899).
39. Ministers may preach for the brethren in Philadelphia, but the service shall be conducted as at home. Whoever desires may support the Mission but Conference does not assume its sponsorship. (O 1899).
40. No appointments shall be made for preachers of other denominations, silenced ministers, and those who proclaim that they are (directly) called of God to preach. (O 1899).
41. Members shall not unite with Labor Unions; or Milk (Producers') Unions. (M 1901).
42. Brethren may quietly vote at the polls but shall not "electioneer," nor attend mass meetings. (M 1901).
43. Conference forbids the following: Clothing the dead in black; having flowers at funerals; membership in secret societies, lodges, labor unions, society clubs; the taking of photographs; attendance at picnics or celebrations; the taking out of life insurance policies; attendance at surprise parties; having Christmas trees; signing tavern licenses; and attendance at state and county fairs. (M 1905).
44. No brother may serve as a bank-watchman, or accept any position which involves the bearing of arms, for that violates our nonresistant faith. (O 1905).

^{33a} Deacon Joseph B. Allebach of Rockhill.

45. The Lexington congregation is granted the privilege of having evening meetings. (O 1905).
(Andrew Mack announced that the Lancaster Conference had assumed the sponsorship of the Philadelphia Mission; Isaac Eby having the bishop-oversight). (M 1907).
46. Brethren shall not accept political offices. (M 1908).
47. Members shall stay away from . . . horse races, baby shows . . . farmer's exhibitions and poultry shows. (O 1908).
48. The members are admonished against Sunday funerals. (M 1909).
49. ". . . a secretary (shall) be appointed to take the minutes of the conference. Jacob Clemens was appointed secretary and Frank Swartz assistant secretary. (1909).
50. The congregation at Vincent is permitted to hold a Bible Instruction Meeting. (M 1910).
51. Conference reports shall be printed and copies sent to the several congregations. (M 1910).
52. Regular prayer meetings are not approved by this conference. (M 1911).
53. Sisters wearing hats are required to dispense with them before the Spring communion. The brethren are admonished to wear the plain clothing. (O 1911).
54. All members working in ammunition factories are not considered as communicant members. (M 1917).

Outside of routine business most of the resolutions of historical value adopted by Conference since 1910 appear in the printed disciplines.³⁴

³⁴ In the Appendix will be found the 1933 "Rules and Discipline" with the dates of the adoption of many of the rules indicated.

Chapter VI

FRANCONIA MENNONITES AND MILITARY SERVICE; POSTWAR FOREIGN RELIEF WORK

Apart from believers' baptism the most distinctive doctrine of the Mennonites is their Biblical nonresistance. The principal founder of the Swiss Brethren Church, Conrad Grebel, declared that Christians "use neither the worldly sword nor engage in war."¹ The Dutch Mennonite leader, Menno Simons, wrote: ". . . Christians are not allowed to fight."^{1a} This principle of nonresistance is not a philosophical pacifism—indeed there has been little effort made to rationally justify the position—but it is derived from a simple acceptance of the ethics of the New Testament, and (they believe) the dictates of an enlightened conscience.

The doctrine of nonresistance was and is fundamental in Mennonite thinking. It is included in all Mennonite confessions of faith.^{1b} Briefly stated the doctrine means that a Christian may not participate in, or support, war or violence in any form whatever. This does not class Mennonites with anarchists, for they believe that the constituted governments are established by God and that it is their duty and privilege to be good citizens and to obey rulers in every point which does not do violence to the conscience. Taxes are willingly paid.

During the two and a half centuries of our life in America there have been several wars. The principle of nonresistance was severely put to the test in these wars. When the leaders of the Skippack congregations saw the coming of the French and Indian War (1754-1763) they arranged for the printing (1748-1749) of the large *Martyrs' Mirror*, the reading of which was calculated to arouse conviction for the doctrine of nonresistance. And in the letter of 1745 which the leading spirits of the district wrote to the Mennonites of Amsterdam, Holland, they indicated that even prior to 1742 they had petitioned the Assembly for military exemption, but had not received it.

We likewise informed you that we have prayed and have made application to our assembly and the authorities in case of such an outbreak, to be exempt from the bearing of arms. Our request has been graciously received, with this answer, however, that it was not in their power to grant the request, and that the right of liberty of conscience

¹ Letter to Thomas Muenzer. An English translation of this letter was published in the *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1905. Quoted by John Horsch, *The Principle of Nonresistance as Held by the Mennonite Church*, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1927, p. 14.

^{1a} *The Complete Works of Menno Simon . . .*, Elkhart, Indiana, 1871; Part II, p. 434b.

^{1b} See John Horsch, *The Principle of Nonresistance as Held by the Mennonite Church*, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa., 1927.

must be sought from his Royal Highness, the King of Great Britain.^{1c} Was it genuine discouragement, or was it part of an appealing cry for help that they wrote:

We recognize the fact that we have made a mistake in coming to this far-off country with insufficient assurance in the matter of freedom of conscience.^{1c}

It appears that the Franconia Mennonites were not pressed very hard to take up arms until the time of the Revolutionary War. Of course they did suffer somewhat from Indian attacks. But there is no evidence that Mennonites used self-defense in any attack made upon them; and they probably fared about as well as their armed neighbors. "There was no compulsory military service in Pennsylvania prior to the Revolution."²

The nonresistant Mennonites are quick to respond to the needs occasioned by war. For example, during the early part of the French and Indian War the Indians murdered and plundered in Northampton county. This was during the winter of 1755-1756. The Mennonite deacons, Christian Meire (Meyer) and Valentine Hunsicker were entrusted with the Mennonite relief supplies. The supplies were delivered to the Moravians to be distributed. Valentine Hunsicker had the following: 34 bushels rye, 2½ bushels wheat, 1½ bushels Indian corn, 7 bushels dried apples, 736 pounds of meal, 185 pounds meat and pork, 4 pounds butter, 21 pounds salt, 12 quarts beans, 6 yards flax linen, 7 yards tow linen, 4 ounces thread, 1 coat and waist coat, 4 pairs children's shoes, 1 child's jacket, 1 red sheet.^{2a}

On April 19, 1775 occurred the battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts, and the war for American independence was begun! At once the war spirit ran high. In Pennsylvania enthusiastic patriots organized companies of soldiers called "associations" to fight the British. These associations were purely of a voluntary nature and were not formed of men drafted by the Pennsylvania government, although the legislature did supply them with arms and ammunition. Mennonites, of course, would not take up arms and the militarists engaged in mob violence in some cases against such a dangerous indifference. During the summer of 1775 both the Pennsylvania Assembly and the Continental Congress declared themselves desirous of respecting the conscientious scruples of the nonresistants. On November 7, 1775 the Pennsylvania Mennonites and German Baptists (Dunkards) united in presenting a petition to the Assembly in which they pleaded their cause and stated their position. On the same day the Assembly ruled that all persons between fifteen and sixty-three (with a few exceptions) who were capable of bearing arms, should, in lieu of military service, pay an an-

^{1c} 1910 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 25, 26.

² Wilbur J. Bender: *Nonresistance in Colonial Pennsylvania*, Scottdale, Pa., 1934, p. 13.

^{2a} 1916 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 18.

nual fine of two pounds and ten shillings.^{2b} Much of the trouble between Christian Funk and his fellow ministers centered about the question of the payment of this war tax. According to Funk most of the Franconia ministers opposed the payment of this special war tax to the Continental government. We do not know how many Mennonites voluntarily paid the fine, how many fines were forcibly collected, nor how many Mennonites were "overlooked" by friendly and lenient officials.

Not only did the Mennonites regard warfare as unchristian, they also refused to take an oath under any circumstances. This position they based directly on the words of Christ: "Swear not at all" (Matt. 5:34). In 1706 the Mennonites petitioned the Provincial Assembly that "since they (with their predecessors for about one hundred fifty years past) could not for conscience' sake take an oath, the same provision may be made for them by law as is made for those called Quakers in this Province and that the said law may be sent home with the rest passed by the late assembly in order to obtain the Queen's Royal approbation."³ The Quaker government of Pennsylvania granted the Mennonites this liberty of conscience. And when in 1717 the Council began to require an oath of allegiance to His Majesty and his Government of all immigrants, the Mennonites were admitted if they would but give "equivalent assurance in their own way and manner."⁴

There now appears to have been a long period during which the Mennonites were not bothered by oaths. But on June 13, 1777 the Assembly passed an act requiring all male inhabitants over eighteen years of age to take an "Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance"—renunciation of all loyalties to the old British government. Those who refused to take this oath were declared "incapable of serving on juries, suing for debts, voting or holding office, buying or selling lands, . . . and possessing arms. Everyone traveling outside his own city or county without having taken the oath was to be clapped in jail till he took it. . . . The Revolutionary authorities, however, did not enforce the act very strictly and seem to have been particularly lenient to the peaceful sects."⁵ On April 1 of the following year a second act declared that any one not taking the Oath by June 1, in addition to previous penalties, could not serve as a guardian or executor nor make a will or testament. In addition such persons shall pay double taxes, and a fine of ten pounds and costs, or serve three months in jail. Finally exile from the state within thirty days, with confiscation of property, was threatened.

Most of the Mennonites were not prosecuted. But some were. In Chester county the fines of 1780, likely for refusing to take the Oath and for "non-associator privileges," included:⁶

^{2b} Christian Funk speaks of a tax of three pounds and ten shillings. (See Part V, Chapter I.)

³ C. Henry Smith: *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania* . . . , Norristown, Pa., 1929, p. 279.

⁴ Colonial Records, III, 29, quoted *ibid.*, p. 279.

⁵ Bender: *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁶ C. Henry Smith: *op. cit.*, p. 297.

	£.	s.	d.
John Buckwalter (succeeded Pennypacker as preacher at Phoenixville)	26	12	10
Christian Holdeman	13	0	0
Matthias Pennypacker (a Mennonite bishop at Phoenixville)	55	5	1
David Buckwalter	55	5	1

And from the members of the Saucon congregation in (what is now) Lehigh county a number suffered severely as the following petitions indicate.

TO the HONORABLE, the Supreme Executive
Council of the Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania:

The petition of George Bachman, Jacob Yeoder, Casper Yeoder, Abraham Yeoder, Henry Sell, Peter Sell, Philip Geisinger, Henry Geisinger, John Geisinger, Christian Young and John Newcomer, of Upper Saucon, in the County of Northampton and State of Pennsylvania,

HUMBLY SHEWETH

That your petitioners having received Sentence of Banishment at the last Court of Quarter Sessions held at Easton, for no other cause but that we could not with freedom of conscience comply with the law of this State imposing a Test on the Inhabitants, and being deeply afflicted with the complicated distresses our unhappy families are thereby involved in; beg leave, in all humility to lay before you, our deplorable case, not destitute of some hope of obtaining your merciful Interposition, as we believe none can justly charge any of us with having ever done any act that can be construed inimical to the State or Government we live under, but have always been peaceable subjects ready and willing to contribute our full proportion towards the support of it except going into the military service, it being contrary to our religious principles to bear arms in any case whatsoever, and if we are found guilty of anything contrary to these our peaceful principles, may we suffer the severest penalties; and your petitioners believing the Supreme Council to be invested with a dispensing power to mitigate the severity of our sentence as we humbly conceive the process against us has not been according to the spirit of the law or the intention of the Legislature with regard to the peaceable industrious part of the people, which error is imputed to the magistrates not clearly understanding the full meaning of the first and third clause of the Act for the further security of the government, past the first of April last, and your petitioners not being able yet to get over their religious scruples about taking the said test, it appearing to us like joining our hands to the military service, and being very desirous to continue to be not only peaceable but useful subjects to this State, do humbly request the Honorable Supreme Council to take

our distressed case into consideration, and grant such relief therein as to you in your wisdom shall seem meet.

And your petitioners shall as in duty pray, etc. 4 July, 1778.

"Accompanying this petition a number of the non-Mennonite neighbors of the above petitioners sent to the Council a memorandum testifying to the good character of the Mennonites, stating that they have always known them to be 'of unblemished reputation for uprightness and integrity in their conduct, conversation and dealings amongst men.' As to the Mennonite attitude toward war they say that 'their present blindness to their own essential interest proceeds from an unhappy bias in their education, and not from a disaffection to the present Government.' These petitions evidently were of little avail, and the most drastic penalties passed the preceding April for noncompliance were applied to the letter as it would seem from the following petition the following September :

To the Honorable the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met :

The petition of Eve Yoder, wife of Jacob Yoder, of Upper Saucon township in the county of Northampton, in this State, yeoman, and Esther Bachman, wife of George Bachman, of Upper Saucon township, aforesaid Yeoman, as well as on behalf of themselves and their said husbands as also on behalf of John Geisinger, Abraham Geisinger, Henry Sell, Jasper Yoder, Abraham Yoder, Jacob Yoder, Henry Geisinger, Christian Young, John Newcomer and George Bachman, all of them freeholders and men of reputation of the said county who have always behaved peaceably and quietly and never intermeddled in State affairs, but paid their taxes and fines, furnished horses and teams for the continental service, whenever demanded, and some of them have gone with their teams as drivers to carry provisions to the army of the United States, for which service they have hitherto received no pay ; that the said freeholders were summoned to appear at the Court of Quarter Sessions held at Easton in June last past, where they appeared accordingly and the test being tendered them by the said Court, which said test they conscientiously scrupled to take (being of the religious society called Menonists). Whereupon the said Court sentenced them to be banished out of the State within thirty days after the said Court and that all their personal estate be confiscated to the State, that afterwards all their said personal estate, even their beds, bedding, linen, Bibles and books, were taken from them and sold by the Sheriff to the amount of about forty thousand pounds. That from some of them all their provisions were taken and even not a morsel of bread left them for their children. That as all their iron stoves were taken from them, though fastened to the freehold, they are deprived of every means of keeping their children warm in the approaching winter, especially at nights, being obliged to lye on the floor without any beds ; that some of the Men's wives were pregnant and near the time of deliverance, which makes their case the more distressing, and that by reason of the said proceedings ten

of the respectful and considerable Familys in the said County of Northampton are becoming destitute and very much reduced.

May it therefore please this Honorable House to take the premises into consideration and to mitigate the Severity of the Sentence of the said Court and that some Regard be had to the command of God laid down in the Scriptures of Truth, to wit: 'What God hath joyned together let not man put asunder.' and that our husbands may be permitted to dwell with us, and that our children may not be taken from us. And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

September the 9th, 1778.

her
Eve X Joder
mark
her
Esther X Bachman
mark

September 10, 1778

Read and ordered to be recommended to the Council."⁷

There is no record of the final disposition of this case. But there are about a dozen and a half graves at the Saucon burying ground on which are G. A. R. markers of the Revolutionary War. Among these are Jacob Joder (1734-1807), Johannes Geissinger (1739-1811), Johannes Neu Kommer (1739- ?), Henrich Geisinger (1737-1817), Peter Sell (1757-1829), Philip Geissinger (1732-1809), and Abraham Geissinger, (1749-1825). Evidently the Council mitigated the severity of the original sentence.

After the war was over Mennonites were again granted the right of citizens. The Constitution of 1790 specified that "those who conscientiously scruple to bear arms shall not be compelled to bear arms but shall pay an equivalent for personal service."⁸ The immunities granted by this law are still guaranteed in Pennsylvania.

The War of 1812 was fought with volunteers, so the Mennonites were not tested. It has often been stated that the War of 1812 called forth another edition of the German *Martyrs' Mirror* (Lancaster, Pa. 1814). Whether the 1814 edition actually was published to strengthen the church on this doctrine because of general concern for its preservation, or whether there was no connection between the war and the publication of the book, is not known. The Mexican War (1846-48) did not involve the Mennonites.

The next major war was the Civil War (1861-1865). In the early part of the war volunteers were plentiful and no conscription of men was necessary. As volunteers became less numerous a bounty of several hundred dollars was offered. This money was made up after the war by the levy of a "bounty tax." Elihu Clemmer recalls having paid a \$25 bounty tax. But on March 3, 1863 an act was passed which provided for the enrollment of

⁷ Smith: *op. cit.*, pp. 300-302.

⁸ C. Henry Smith: *The Mennonites of America*, Goshen, Indiana, 1909, p. 372.

the national forces, and one section of which provided for a draft, if it should prove necessary. Sometime during the progress of the war, probably about this time, Bishop Jacob Kulp of the Plain congregation, and Deacon Abraham M. Clemmer of the Franconia congregation, accompanied by Moritz Loeb, publisher of the Doylestown (Pa.) *Morgenstern* went to Harrisburg and interviewed Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin. Thaddeus Stevens of Lancaster; a prominent member of the Lower House, also was energetic in promoting the interests of an important element in his constituency. And the Quakers always were active politically in securing military exemption. On February 24, 1864 a stricter conscription act was passed. But Section 17 favored the members of the nonresistant sects as follows:

And be it further enacted that members of religious denominations who shall by oath or affirmation declare that they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms and who are prohibited from doing so by the rules and articles of faith and practise of said religious denominations, shall when drafted into the military service be considered non-combatants, and shall be assigned by the Secretary of War to duty in hospitals or to the care of freedom, or shall pay the sum of \$300 to such person as the Secretary of War shall designate, to be applied to the benefit of the sick and wounded soldiers: Provided, that no person shall be entitled to the benefit of the provisions of this section unless his declaration of conscientious scruples against bearing arms shall be supported by satisfactory evidence that his department has been uniformly consistent with such declaration.⁹

There were then two methods of escaping military service. Members of churches whose tenets opposed war were exempted upon the payment of the \$300. A number (e. g. John N. Souder of the Franconia congregation, father of John D. Souder) paid this fine on two occasions. The other method was by hiring a substitute. Substitutes were not only hired by nonresistants but this was the general way of escaping military service for any one desiring to remain at home. At first some substitutes could be hired for a few hundred dollars. But as they became more scarce they were able to command immense sums. For example Frank H. Moyer of the Salford congregation (his widow is Mrs. Sarah C. Landis at the Mennonite Home, Souderton), who was not yet a baptized member, paid \$1000 for a substitute.

One member of the Lexington congregation, Jacob S. Overholt (father of John M. Overholt) felt that he would be responsible if his substitute were killed. (Evidently he also was certain the \$300 would also simply be used to hire soldiers.) So when he was drafted he went to camp. He died in 1865 and his widow used to relate the following story to her children: One day as the none-too-vigorous Overholt was working Abraham Lincoln walked through the camp. He stopped a moment with Overholt and asked his age. "Forty-six," replied Overholt. "Do you have a family?" asked

⁹ *United States Stat. at Large*, Vol. 13, Chapter XIII, Sec. 17, quoted in Smith: *op. cit.*, p. 377.

Lincoln. "Eleven children." Lincoln reached in his pocket for a pencil and pad, wrote a note, and asked Overholt to report to his commanding officer. He did so; and was paid and discharged! Some months later he took sick. While on his deathbed his son John (aged seven, and who now in his eightieth year^{9a} told the story to the author) brought home the *Morgenstern* which contained the news of Lincoln's assassination. John says his father wept.

Evidently very few Mennonites accepted military service. The Franconia congregation had one soldier, Ephraim Delp. After the war he made a confession to the congregation and was reinstated. But there were a number of young men, not yet baptized, who accepted military service, and who later, as Mennonites, were pensioned for their service!

The Saucon petitions of 1778 indicate that during the Revolutionary War some Mennonites were forced to further the war by serving as teamsters. Very likely many of these teamsters were young men who were not yet baptized. The Upper Milford Mennonite burying ground has at least ten graves with G. A. R. markers of the Revolutionary War.

No pressure to service of this type seems to have been exerted upon the Mennonites during the Civil War. But some Mennonites did make heavy overcoats and similar garments for the soldiers at a dollar per garment. And after the war, when the government needed money and offered government bonds of \$530 each, paying five per cent interest in gold (which greatly exceeded the value of paper money) the Franconia Mennonites bought freely.

The Spanish-American War of 1898 was fought with volunteers and was the occasion of no trouble for the Mennonites.

When the United States entered the great World War on April 6, 1917 the doctrine of nonresistance was to be tested as it had not been tested for almost a century and a half. It should be mentioned at once that the Franconia Mennonites were at no time abused physically; they seem to have fared somewhat better than some of their brethren in the western part of the United States. Perhaps this was due to the fact that, being more numerous in the East, Mennonites are better understood there by their neighbors. Humanly speaking, part of this credit is also due those who were actively in touch with the officials at Washington.

The United States government declared its policy in regard to the conscientious objectors in "section 1644 of the Selective Service Law of May 18, 1917, which, after exempting certain public officials, ministers and students of religion, and persons in the military and naval services, provides:

And nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to require or compel any person to serve in any of the forces herein provided for who is found to be a member of any well recognized religious sect or organization at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form and

^{9a} John M. Overholt died September 21, 1936.

whose religious convictions are against war or participation therein in accordance with the creed or principles of said religious organization; but no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be noncombatant.¹⁰

This after all certainly did not allow for full freedom of conscience, for it is conceivable that a given "conscientious objector" might have conscientious scruples against performing duties which the President had declared noncombatant. Conscience is an individual matter. Nevertheless members of the nonresistant sects rejoiced that the exemption went even so far. On August 9, 1917 the bishops and secretary of the Franconia Mennonite Conference addressed a letter to President Woodrow Wilson thanking him for the consideration already shown the Mennonites, assuring him of a good attitude on their part, and pledging him their support in prayer; but pleading for a fuller freedom of conscience:

Therefore we humbly petition your excellency that we may be exempted from participation in war *in any form* AND SINCERELY APPEAL TO YOU that in your message setting forth what shall constitute noncombatant service, that you give due recognition to our religious convictions, that we may be permitted to serve God and humanity in such capacity only as will not violate our conscientious obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In due time splendid consideration was granted to the drafted Mennonites. It might also be mentioned here that at the May 3 meeting of that year Conference had declared that

All members working in ammunition factories are not considered as communicant members.

On June 5, 1917 all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one were required to register at their respective voting places.

A special session of Conference met at the Souderton meetinghouse on August 20, 1917. A number of young brethren had been drafted. It was the sense of the meeting that Mennonites could accept no service, either combatant or noncombatant under the military arm of the government. At this special meeting a committee of three was appointed to work with the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, the Church of the Brethren, and the Brethren in Christ. This committee was composed of Bishop A. G. Clemmer, Preacher Joseph G. Ruth, and Deacon Wilson R. Moyer. They were instructed to go to Washington in behalf of the drafted brethren.

The committee of three, accompanied by William A. Derstine and others, went to Washington. (Unfortunately no one recorded the movements of the Franconia brethren during the World War. There is a slight disagreement among the several brethren involved on matters of detail, such as the exact order of the several interviews.) There was considerable fruitless energy expended in seeking interviews with the proper officials. For example an effort was made to interview Joseph P. Tumulty, secretary

¹⁰ Walter Guest Kellogg: *The Conscientious Objector*, New York, 1919, pp. 16, 17.

to the President, but he informed them that the work they desired was not in his province. After some time William A. Derstine and a member of the Franconia Conference Committee paged Senator Boies Penrose from the senate (which was then in session) and told him they desired an interview with Secretary of War Baker. Senator Penrose instructed his secretary, Leighton Taylor, to promptly arrange for the interview. A telegram was then sent to the Mennonite General Conference (which was then in session at the Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, near Goshen, Indiana) informing them of the coming interview with Mr. Baker. A return wire requested them to postpone the meeting a day or two as the General Conference Committee^{10a} was also hastening to Washington. A member of the Conference Committee then arranged by telephone for the postponement of the interview with the Secretary of War.

Before the interview with Mr. Baker the Franconia Committee and William A. Derstine interviewed Provost Marshal General Crowder. General Crowder had a Bible on his desk and soon called their attention to the military preparedness and co-operation exhibited in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (as recorded in the fourth chapter of Nehemiah). Senator Atlee Pomerene of Ohio was also visited in the company of two Old Order Amish Mennonites^{10b} from Ohio. The Amish brethren were personally acquainted with Mr. Pomerene; and he kindly called Secretary Baker on the telephone and assured him that the Mennonites planning to interview him were a "well-meaning people." Senator Pomerene had a Mennonite Confession of Faith lying open upon his desk.

On Saturday morning, September 1, 1917 the Franconia Committee, the General Conference Committee, and the Amish Committee from Ohio interviewed Secretary Baker. Mr. Baker received the committees very cordially and was very considerate in the terms he presented to them. The Franconia Committee returned home at once and on Monday, September 3, another special meeting of Conference and interested laymen was held in the Souderton meetinghouse. A report of this meeting is here given as reported by the *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) correspondent.

Souderton, Pa., September 3, 1917

Mennonite young men called in the draft will respond on the dates fixed for their appearance at local board headquarters to entrain for mobilization camps. Moreover they will meekly travel to these camps with their fellows in the call. But when they arrive at the mobilization points they will decline to wear a soldier's uniform or perform, as combatants or as noncombatants, any service in any way related to warfare. For this they expect to be sent as prisoners into detention camps, where they are resolved to remain, humbly but firmly obedient to the highest tenets of their faith—"thou shalt not kill" and "return good for evil."

10a This committee was composed of Aaron Loucks, S. G. Shetler, and D. D. Miller.

10b A layman, Benjamin Weaver, Sugar Creek, Ohio, and a Slabaugh (?).

This was the decision of the Franconia Conference of the Old Mennonites¹¹ held in the Souderton Church, here today. When it was reached by a vote of the bishops, ministers, and deacons the nearly 1000 conferees¹² wept in their resignation to what they believe the will of the Lord, and then they exhorted their parting youth to "go with a childlike faith in one another and a childlike love for one another and for the world and to resist naught but temptation."

With the simplicity almost incredible unless it were seen, the believers in nonresistance commended the souls of their sons to God while they "are suffering the punishment meted out for their faith" and counseled them to remain silent in face of all persecutions, great or petty. They told them to abstain from all the pleasures of camp life, particularly [enjoining] them against such inconsistencies with their humility, as card playing, and the use of tobacco. They raised a fund to defray the obligations of such as "undergo the punishment," and crying like the children whose pure lives they seek to emulate joined with the lads in emotional praying for the peace of nations and the salvation of men.

The conference, today, embracing seventeen Mennonite churches in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, in which there are about 350 drafted men, was held in this Montgomery County village to permit the faithful to reach a conclusion concerning what should be the attitude of the young men following a report of a meeting with Secretary Baker last Saturday. . . .

Presiding over the conference were three Bishops of the church namely, Bishop H. B. Rosenberger, of Perkasio; Bishop Jonas Mininger, of Elroy, and Bishop Abram Klemmer, of Franconia, as well as Deacons W. P. Moyer of Sellersville, one of the members of the committee. . . . There were present nearly a hundred deacons and ministers, besides the laity, and as they entered the church and took their seats near the pulpit, they kissed each other on the lips, following the custom that has prevailed among them for centuries.

The peaceful smiles which marked the greetings on all sides as the brethren flocked into the meetinghouse faded, however when the meeting was called to order and Bishop Klemmer in the language of the Pennsylvania Germany Country, explained its grave purpose. They sang two hymns, one entitled "The Christian's Passport," and the other "Laban."

Then Bishop Klemmer and Deacon Moyer related in detail their communications with the General Conference, which met in Yellow Creek Church near Goshen, Ind., last week, and their visit to Secretary Baker, who however, did not see them until after General Crowder had

¹¹ In the region with which this history deals members of the Franconia Conference are called "Old" Mennonites in distinction from members of the Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonites, commonly called "New" Mennonites.

¹² The ordained men of the Franconia Conference numbered less than sixty; the greater part of those present were visiting laymen.

told them that any of their young men who refused to go to mobilization camps would be imprisoned exactly as though they had deserted from the army. . . .

BELIEVE BAKER IN SYMPATHY

Their interview with Secretary Baker, they said, convinced them that he fully understood the depth of their aversion to warfare, and they reported they were confident he would do all in his power for them so "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." Although they obtained nothing in writing from him, they set down in writing immediately following their interview the substance of his advice, and it was this advice which formed the high point of the discussion today.

The advice of the Secretary of War as written by Bishop Klemmer is as follows: . . .

Rather than continue with the *Public Ledger* article the author will here copy a small broadside which was evidently printed at the instance of the Franconia Mennonites but which is almost identical to a word with the letters sent out by the General Conference Committee.^{12a} In place of "your brethren, Aaron Loucks, S. G. Shetler, D. D. Miller, General Conference Committee" at the end of the letter, there is simply substituted at the end of the document: "The above resolutions were adopted by Franconia Conference, September 3rd, 1917."

Washington, D. C.,
September 1, 1917.

In an interview with the Secretary of War Baker, who received us very kindly, we received the following information and instructions:

1. That none of our brethren need serve in any capacity which violates their creed and conscience.
2. When they are called, they should report at the place designated on their notice.
3. From the place designated on their notice, they should go with others, who are drafted and called, to the training camp.
4. Report to the army officers the church to which they belong, and their belief in its creed and principles.
5. This non-resistant position will place them in detention camps, where they will be properly fed and cared for.
6. In these camps they will not be uniformed nor drilled.
7. A list of services considered non-combatant will be offered, but they need not accept any in violation of their conscience.
8. Those who cannot accept any service, either combatant or noncombatant, will be assigned to some other service not under the military arm of the government, to be designated later by Secretary Baker and the President.

^{12a} J. S. Hartzler: *Mennonites in the World War* . . . , Scottsdale, Pa., 1921, pp. 67, 68.

9. Our ministers will be allowed to visit the brethren at these camps and to keep in touch with them.

10. Our ministers will be privileged to give this information and advice to our brethren in private or in public meetings.

As a committee, appointed by General Conference, assembled at the Yellow Creek Church, near Goshen, Ind., August 29th, 1917, in consultation with a committee of brethren appointed by the Franconia Conference, and a committee of Old Order Amish brethren, we have unanimously agreed to advise the following:

1. Since the interview with the War Department, we advise our brethren to state their position on Church creed and principles to the army officers at mobilization camps.

2. We again encourage our brethren not to accept any service, either combatant or non-combatant, under the military arm of the government in violation of their conscience and the creed or principles of the Church.

While our brethren will not be freed entirely, yet freed from serving under the military arm of the government, we should be very grateful for the consideration that the authorities have shown us.

May our churches everywhere continue to send prayers to the Throne of Grace in behalf of our young brethren in this trying hour and for those in authority so "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life."

The above resolutions were adopted by Franconia Conference, September 3rd, 1917.

The Special Conference of the Church of the Brethren held at Goshen, Indiana, in 1917, appointed a committee of three to meet the special needs occasioned by the war. W. J. Swigart, a teacher in Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa., Isaac W. Taylor, Neffsville, Pa. (an uncle to Deacon Edgar H. Taylor of the Frazer Mennonite congregation) and H. C. Early, Penn Laird, Va., were the members of this "Central Service Committee of the Church of the Brethren." These men desired official confirmation of the above report of the interview of September 1. Through Congressman W. W. Greist of Lancaster (himself a member of the Society of Friends and also a personal friend of I. W. Taylor) an interview was secured for Swigart and Taylor with Secretary Baker. Mr. Baker confirmed all the ten points except the eighth. This was then restated as follows:

Those who cannot accept any service, either combatant or non-combatant, will be held in detention camps to await such disposition of their case as the Government may decide upon.

Aaron Loucks of Scottdale sent the corrected report to Secretary Baker and under date of September 14, 1917 received a letter from Mr. F. D. Keppel, Third Assistant Secretary of War, stating that in the corrected form the report was entirely satisfactory to Mr. Baker.

The first five brethren^{12b} from the Franconia Conference, together with other Mennonite conscientious objectors, arrived at Camp Meade, Md., September 19, 1917. The uniform was forced on two Mennonite conscientious objectors the next day. Aaron Loucks reported this incident in a letter to Mr. Baker. On the same date as Brother Loucks wrote to him, the Secretary of War issued an order "to all Commanding Generals of the National Army and National Guard Divisions to the effect that selected Mennonites who report to camps for duty be not forced to wear the uniform . . ." ¹³ Apparently there was only one Franconia Mennonite who experienced much difficulty in claiming his right to wear civilian clothes—Levi M. Meyers at Camp Greenleaf, Ga.

The following list comprises the conscientious objectors of the Franconia Conference. After each man's name is given his congregation, and the camp to which he was sent.

1. Mahlon R. Alderfer, Rockhill, Camp Lee, Va.
2. Herbert E. Beck, Blooming Glen, Camp Meade, Md.
3. Reinhert B. Bishop, Lexington, Camp Meade, Md.
4. David D. Derstine, Franconia, Camp Meade, Md.
5. Norman A. Derstine, Souderton, Camp Meade, Md.
6. Isaac O. Frederick, Franconia, Camp Meade, Md.
7. David H. Gehman, Hereford, Camp Dix, N. J.
8. Howard M. Hunsberger, Blooming Glen, Camp Meade, Md.
9. Daniel S. Landes, Deep Run, Camp Meade, Md.
10. Marcus K. Lederach, Salford, Camp Meade, Md.
11. Melvin L. Moyer, Towamencin, Camp Meade, Md.
12. Levi M. Meyers, Deep Run, Camp Greenleaf, Ga.
13. Edward Rice, Deep Run, Camp Meade, Md.
14. William Rice, Deep Run, Camp Meade, Md.
15. Abraham M. Stover, Blooming Glen, Camp Green, N. C.
16. John Ward, Rockhill, Camp Meade, Md.

Four of the Franconia Mennonites who were drafted accepted service. Clayton D. Kaisinger of the Souderton congregation saw service abroad. After the war he united with the Reformed Church. Walter Lapp of the Lexington congregation also saw service abroad. He later united with the Lutheran Church. Philip G. Mack of the Plain congregation accepted noncombatant service at Camp Meade; was again received into the fellowship of the church after the war, but later united with the General Conference Mennonites. Howard D. Swartley of the Franconia congregation accepted hospital work, chiefly at Camp Jackson, S. C., and at Camp Wadsworth, S. C. After the war he united with the Lutheran Church. One member, Edgar O. Brunner of the Souderton congregation, enlisted soon after the declaration of war with Germany, was in the division of the United

^{12b} Isaac O. Frederick, Marcus K. Lederach, Melvin L. Moyer, William Rice, and John Ward.

¹³ From a letter of the Adjutant General, Mr. L. A. Dewey, to Aaron Loucks, September 29, 1917.

States army stationed along the Mexican border, and was discharged in May, 1919. Upon confession he was again received into the fellowship of the church and today is a member of the Rockhill congregation.

A brief description of the Franconia Mennonite C. O.'s and their camp experiences is in order. They were almost all single. Only one had more than the education provided by the public schools. The greater part were farmers, though there were also several machinists, a brickmaker, an automobile mechanic, a baker, a merchant, a factory employee, etc. Their years of birth ranged from 1891 to 1896. They were called to the several Camps from September, 1917 to September, 1918. Twelve, it will be noted, were at Camp Meade. Usually they were transferred to the C. O. Barracks very soon after arrival at Meade. Two of those at Meade were sent to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and at least eight of the remaining ones were furloughed out on farms on July 16, 1918. In general, those at Meade, as well as Alderfer at Camp Lee, and Stover were given splendid consideration; of course they were strongly urged to accept some form of service. Stover was transferred to Camp Wadsworth, S. C., after a few months and was there placed among other C. O.'s. Gehman, at Camp Dix, N. J., was made to work rather strenuously to influence him to accept the uniform. (He didn't accept it.) Meyers, who was sent to Camp Greenleaf, Ga., was compelled to carry a heavy load of crushed stone for hour after hour. Finally he submitted to the wearing of the uniform. Two weeks later A. G. Clemmer and W. R. Moyer went to Camp Greenleaf in his behalf and Meyers was permitted to again wear civilian clothes. The strength of conviction of the young brethren was tested in various ways; threats were made to intimidate them, etc.; but no one was kicked, beaten, or otherwise physically abused or tortured. In fact after some time ministers were permitted to hold services in the C. O. Barracks, and the brethren were quite at ease. Indeed Major Kellogg¹⁴ very wisely recommends that the C. O.'s should hereafter be segregated in non-military camps, rather than have them in military camps, "where every other drafted man could see them lolling about and basking in the sun." One cannot but expect the average soldier to resent what appears to be mere cowardice and an unwillingness to fight for his country.

Perhaps one is justified in turning aside a moment to examine the picture of a typical Mennonite as presented by Major Kellogg.¹⁵ Of course he acknowledges that he based his impressions solely on his camp contacts, and on some Mennonite literature he read. On the whole the few historical errors he makes are easily overlooked. But those who know the Mennonites feel that in the picture drawn by Major Kellogg we see standing before us a rather unworthy example of one of the minor branches of the denomination. Their unsocial character; their rural isolation; their wearing of beards, "hooks and eyes" in place of buttons, etc.; does not describe the Mennonite Church. It is indeed true that Mennonites are chiefly an agricultural people,

¹⁴ Kellogg: *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-42, 130.

are generally settled in colonies, do maintain a certain degree of separation from the stream of American life, and so on. Many indeed do not vote; but this is due to a feeling that if they cannot support the government in military measures they should have no voice in the administration of the government. It may also be mentioned that our experience during the World War deepened that conviction in the minds of many. Before the Civil War, e. g., the majority of Mennonites voted. So far as the author knows there are scarcely a dozen Mennonites in the Franconia Conference who wear beards,—and they are old men. Not one of the bishops wears a beard, and their hair is not “unkempt.” Our separation from “the world” can be largely explained by the fact that our ancestors were for generations cruelly persecuted, even martyred, in Europe for believing in the baptism of adults, and the like. Whatever plainness of attire there is evident is not worn to recall how European peasants dressed centuries ago, but is intended to be a visible symbol of the separation between the people of God and those who are not Christians (Romans 12:2, etc.). One cannot but wish that Major Kellogg had visited a Mennonite community before describing “The Mennonite.” And the Mennonite Church was almost five times the size of the Old Order Amish Mennonite group in 1919; today the ratio is more than six to one. There were, in 1919, 36,980 members of the Mennonite Church. Some of the minor branches (who seem to be the ones described) are: Conservative Amish Mennonites 1,254; Defenseless Mennonites 1,090; Old Order Mennonites 1,608; Old Order Amish Mennonites 7,746; Reformed Mennonites 1,764; etc. Major Kellogg’s description may be true to some extent of some of the minor branches, but even then one feels he failed to understand them.

The work of Brethren Clemmer, Ruth, and Moyer consisted chiefly of camp visitation, after the first interviews in Washington. The Committee was instrumental in securing better consideration in at least one case (Meyers), and was the means of encouraging the Mennonite C. O.’s in the camps. When the young men were called to the camps this Committee gave them typewritten sheets, “Helpful Hints to Our Young Brethren.” The advice given was to take along a Bible, Sunday School Lesson Quarterly, Mennonite Confession of Faith, and a Church Membership certificate. The Committee urged the brethren to wear a “plain suit and hat;” to live a clean and exemplary life, to live close to God, to write home frequently and to meet together to study the Sunday school lessons if possible. The Committee advised them against voting, since they cannot support the government in its military demands. The sheet is signed: “By order of the Church.”

One of the most active men during the World War was William A. Derstine of the Rockhill congregation. Born September 10, 1888 he is of the sixth generation of Derstines in America (of pioneer and deacon Michael). When the United States entered the War he was in the automobile business in Quakertown. He at once became active in assisting the Franconia Committee. (In fact Conference extended to him a vote of thanks.) When Brethren Loucks and Miller were not able to hold services at Camp Meade Brother Derstine accompanied them (and Brethren Good

and Habecker of the Lancaster Conference) to Washington and they interviewed General Crowder on October 23. The General called Secretary Baker on the telephone and arrangements were quickly made for Brethren Good and Habecker to hold services in the C. O. Barracks the next day. And all through the War Brother Derstine was working in close contact with the War Department, the General Conference Committee, and with Wilbur K. Thomas, Executive Secretary of the *American Friends Service Committee*. Brother Derstine made many trips to Washington and New York, bearing the expenses himself, in behalf of the Mennonites and their cause. (Mr. Thomas, with a group of about twenty young men the majority of whom were Mennonites and Quakers who had been furloughed to the Friends' organization, visited the services at Rockhill one Sunday morning during the late summer of 1918). The January 11, 1919 Special Session of Conference appointed Brother Derstine to co-operate with the Lancaster and Western committees in reference to our interests in the bills now pending in congress calling for universal military training." (He was released at the October, 1919 Conference.)

At a joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Mennonite Relief Commission, some members of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and some members of the Lancaster and Franconia Conferences, held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, January 4, 1919, a decision of importance was reached. The group decided to accept the invitation of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (later the Near East Relief) to send a group of Mennonite relief workers to the Near East. William A. Derstine and Aaron Loucks were chosen as "special investigators and general directors for the opening of the work." A group of forty-two men (nine were Mennonites), with a cargo of several thousand tons of relief supplies, sailed from New York on January 25, 1919. The leaders (Derstine and Loucks) returned in May. No Mennonite Unit was established; the Mennonites accepted work under the Near East Relief Committee.

The matter of furloughs for the religious C. O.'s was taken up by Derstine, Loucks, Thomas, and others on a number of trips to Washington. Mr. F. P. Keppel, Third Assistant Secretary of War, had the administration of the objectors in his charge. Mr. R. C. McCrea of Columbia University was entrusted with the task of administering furloughs to the objectors. As was noted above all but about two of the Franconia Mennonite objectors at Camp Meade were furloughed to farm service. The matter of examining the objectors as to their sincerity, was in the hands of a National Board of Inquiry. The following three men were appointed to membership on the Board on June 1, 1918: Major Richard C. Stoddard of the Judge Advocate General's Department, chairman; Mr. Harlan F. Stone, Dean of the Columbia University Law School; and Judge Julian W. Mack of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. About two and a half months later Major Stoddard was assigned to duty overseas, and was succeeded as chairman and member by Judge Walter G. Kellogg of the Judge Advocate General's Department. This committee traveled all over the United States visiting the several army camps and examining C. O.'s. The C. O.'s were divided into a number of classes: those recommended for farm or industrial

furlough, those recommended for noncombatant service, those (insincere) assigned to military duty, etc. Fifteen objectors from Camp Meade were transferred to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 11, 1918, for further examination. In this group were the Brethren David D. Derstine and Marcus K. Lederach. There they were placed in C. O. Barracks, and given non-military tasks. Two weeks later (July 25) they (at least Derstine and Lederach) were transferred to Fort Riley, Kansas, and again placed in C. O. Barracks. Here they worked as laborers. On October 18, Derstine was furloughed to a farm at Sterling, Illinois. Lederach was furloughed to a farm in Kansas.

Mahlon R. Alderfer of Fort Lee, Va., was furloughed to State Hospital work at Williamsburg and Staunton (Va.) on October 12, 1918. David H. Gehman of Camp Dix, N. J., was scheduled for a farm furlough, but after the Armistice (Nov. 11) he was held in camp until discharged, December 13, 1918. Most of the Franconia Mennonite C. O.'s were discharged in December, 1918 or January, 1919. Conference advised them to return their pay to the Government; and Conference pledged itself to pay the young brethren for the time they spent "in witnessing for Christ." The Committee of three (Clemmer, Ruth, and Moyer) had charge of this matter. Most of the C. O.'s returned their money as suggested. The committee raised \$3,722.05 for the purpose but needed only \$2,627.18 to pay the brethren.

Again it should be emphasized that the Franconia Mennonites were given very fine consideration by the Government. As early as May 2, 1918 Conference sent a letter of thanks to President Wilson "for the care and regard . . . shown our brethren." Under date of May 13 J. P. Tumulty, Secretary to the President, sent the following letter to J. C. Clemens, Secretary of Conference:

The President asks me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 2d, and to thank you for your courtesy in writing him.

What should be the attitude of a nonresistant group toward buying "Liberty Bonds"? The official organ of the Mennonite Church the *Gospel Herald*, opposed such investments on the part of (nonresistant) Mennonites. The leaders of the Franconia Conference concurred. The May 2, 1918 Conference stated it had no objection to its members buying "Farm Loan Bonds,"—as suggested by Aaron Loucks. (However, not many Mennonites purchased them.) And all the while rather insistent efforts were being made to urge our people to buy Liberty Bonds. A special meeting of Conference was held at the Souderton meetinghouse on July 25, 1918. The following resolution was adopted: "Be it resolved that we adopt the plan offered by W. L. Crooks to deposit into the local banks and for local purposes only such sums of money as may be arranged by the authority of the church and representatives of the Government." This plan was adopted to escape loaning money to the Government for war purposes. Yet it seems that the plan was never set in operation. What actually happened was that the Franconia Mennonites gave money in at least three ways: a small number bought Farm Bonds; a larger number bought Liberty Bonds when

strongly urged; and finally a heavy drive for relief contributions was made. It is altogether probable that the great majority of Mennonites were opposed in principle to furthering the war by financial means. Yet when pressure came they probably placated their consciences with the thought that if the Government needs money it is the duty of a Christian to support his Government, and the responsibility for the expenditure of the money devolves upon the Government, not the Bond purchaser.

During this time relief drives were conducted among the Franconia Mennonites. By April, 1918, they raised \$9,491.02. The May Conference of 1918 decided "that the collections for war sufferers' relief be continued." By April 1919, \$29,044.15 more was raised. A Special Session of Conference was held in the Souderton meetinghouse January 11, 1919. "Relief and other problems arising because of the World War were considered." A Relief Committee consisting of A. G. Clemmer and W. R. Moyer was appointed to co-operate with the Lancaster and Western Committees in considering the needs of Armenia. The May Conference instructed the Relief Committee to attend the meeting at Kalona, Iowa in June (1919) to "represent the interests of the Franconia Conference relative to relief work." The Mennonite Church was handling relief funds at that time through a "Mennonite Relief Commission" which had been organized at the Forks Church near Middlebury, Indiana, December 26, 1917. The Commission supported the reconstruction work being carried on in France by the *American Friends Service Committee*^{15a} of Philadelphia, and the Armenian relief contributions were given to the *American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief* of New York. Throughout the Mennonite Church many Sewing Circles were organized and the garments made were forwarded through the American Friends Service Committee.

Another special session of Conference was held at the Souderton meetinghouse November 26, 1919. Conference decided "to help feed the undernourished children in Central Europe." The work was carried on by the American Friends Service Committee in response to an appeal from Herbert Hoover, United States Food Commissioner. The money was sent by the treasurer of the Franconia Mission Board to the treasurer of the A. F. S. C., Mr. Charles F. Jenkins. By April, 1920, \$5,982.34 were raised, in addition to War Relief contributions of \$4,541.46. The total relief contributions of the Franconia Mennonites from 1917 to April, 1920 was \$49,058.97. The relief committee consisted of A. G. Clemmer, Joseph G. Ruth and W. R. Moyer. Relief work has been carried on until the present. Money was contributed to the Near East Relief, Mennonite relief work in Russia, Russian Mennonite emigrant fund, Mississippi flood sufferers, etc. In 1936 \$2,425.52 was contributed to the Johnstown, Pennsylvania, flood sufferers. The Franconia Mennonites have given about a hundred thousand dollars

^{15a} Harvey G. Mack of the Plain Mennonite congregation sailed for France in June, 1918. He served in reconstruction work under the American Red Cross and the American Friends Service Committee, returning to the United States in March, 1920. Mr. Mack is a brother of Philip G. Mack, referred to earlier in this chapter. Both reside in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

to relief work since the great War, and this is in addition to home and foreign mission contributions.

This account would not be complete without the tragic story of our lamented brother, Clayton H. Kratz,¹⁶ who lost his life while carrying on relief work in Russia. He was born November 5, 1896 in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, the son of William and Elizabeth Kratz. At the age of eight he moved with his parents to the village of Blooming Glen where he ultimately finished high school. After attending West Chester Normal School he taught school for several years. He then enrolled at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, on September 26, 1917.

As early as 1919 there was a conviction on the part of some Mennonites that relief work should be carried on in South Russia by the Mennonite Church. In August a committee of three, A. J. Miller, J. Roy Allgyer and A. E. Hiebert, was sent to Russia to investigate and report. They reported that a very great need existed. The following June (1920) the Mennonites of South Russia sent a committee of four brethren to the United States to appeal for help. On July 27 the great relief organization of the several branches of the Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Central Committee, was organized at Elkhart, Indiana. During August relief supplies and more funds were gathered. A group of four was to be sent, but only three had been chosen. In the course of a conversation by the Secretary of the Relief Committee with Harold S. Bender, now Dean of Goshen College, and in response to a request for a suggestion, Brother Bender recommended Clayton Kratz who would have been a senior in Goshen College that fall and had been elected president of the student religious organization, the Y. P. C. A. Kratz expressed willingness to accept the call of the church and postponed his school career for the time. He was approved. A relief unit, Orie O. Miller of Akron, Pennsylvania; Arthur Slagel of Flanagan, Illinois; and Clayton Kratz of Blooming Glen, Pennsylvania; was selected to go to Russia and to begin relief operations with twenty-five tons of clothing, bedding, etc., and a minimum budget of ten thousand dollars per month. They sailed from New York on the steamer *Providence*, September 1, 1920, for Naples, Italy. After staying eight days in Italy they sailed for Constantinople, arriving on September 21; Brethren Kratz and Miller sailed for Sebastol, Crimea, on October 2. Soon after arrival they pressed on into the Russian interior, visiting the Mennonite settlements at Alexandrovsk and Halbstadt. Brother Kratz remained at the latter place while Brother Miller returned to Constantinople. Brother Kratz at once began to formulate relief plans. This portion of Russia was then under General Wrangel and his (anti-Bolshevik) White Army. But the Russian situation was so uncertain that the American Mennonites chose Constantinople as their distant base of supplies. Judging from the account of G. A. Peters, a Russian Mennonite and new friend of Brother Kratz, the risk Clayton took by working in Halbstadt was grave; but Brother Kratz was losing his life for his brethren's (and Christ's) sake. And then, "That which we had for some

¹⁶ Vide P. C. Hiebert and Orie O. Miller: *Feeding the Hungry, Russia Famine, 1919-1925*, Scottdale, Pa., 1929, pp. 90-96; 165-170; 343-353.

time seen coming, but in which none of us wanted to believe, came. It came with a storm and a tempest that overthrew and destroyed everything. The army of General Wrangel was forced to retreat precipitously, first into Crimea, then into foreign parts. Then the Red Soviet banner waved over all government buildings from the cold ice-sea to the Sunny South coast. Destruction and death went mocking and vagrant through the land." The Russian Mennonites had urged Brother Kratz to flee. Perhaps he had not fully understood his danger. But he had resolved to stay. And his Russian brethren admired him for it. The evening before the White Army withdrew Kratz had been persuaded to leave for Crimea. But he never was permitted to start. For the White Army withdrew; the Reds took charge; and immediately arrested Brother Kratz. Through the efforts of Russian Mennonites he was soon released. Again he went about his work.

"At Goshen College he had always taken an active part in the religious activities of the school community, and now, awaiting with uncertainty the developments of each day, he spent much time reading the Bible he had carried with him. His calm resignation deeply impressed the family with whom he stayed. He spoke of his mother, his family, and his dearest friends." One evening a messenger rushed to Brother Peters announcing that Brother Kratz had again been arrested. He had already been taken from Halbstadt. The next day a Russian Mennonite saw and spoke with him a few moments. Clayton "was entirely quiet and composed in spirit." He was last seen in Fuerstenwerder.

Brother Peters made a fruitless effort to follow him. Brother Alvin J. Miller (now of Springs, Pennsylvania), later Director of American Mennonite Relief in Russia, later appealed to the Soviet Foreign Office at Kharkow. But Clayton Kratz was gone. No one knows his earthly resting place. He laid down his life for his friends. In the cemetery of the Blooming Glen Mennonite Church a stone has been erected in his memory with the simple inscription:

MEMORIAL
CLAYTON H. KRATZ
Nov. 5, 1896
WENT TO RUSSIA 1920

Chapter VII

RELATED GROUPS

Only the briefest of sketches can here be given of four related groups, and these are written by one who is not an authority on their life and history.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

The Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, was founded in England in the seventeenth century by George Fox (1624-1691). Fox began to preach his message of repentance in 1648. In a few years he gathered a large group of followers and by 1666 he had set up a complete church organization. In some respects the Quakers were similar to Mennonites. Both groups emphasized the need of a personal conversion from sin to God, opposed all war and rejected all oaths, had no salaried ministers, and dressed plainly. This similarity is striking. Quakers have been styled English Mennonites and Mennonites have (quite unhistorically) been called German Quakers. Even a Quaker historian says that "George Fox owed much of what was characteristic and distinctive in his teaching to the Anabaptist leaven which pervaded south-eastern England during the latter half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries."¹

But Mennonites and Quakers differed fundamentally. The Quakers rejected all ordinances, observing neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper. But even this distinction is superficial. Mennonites have always held that the final authority in faith and life is the Word of God, the Bible. The Quakers held that every man on earth has an "inner light" which, if obeyed, is a perfect and sufficient guide. Actually this elevates a man's conscience above the teachings of the Scripture. This opens a wide door in life and doctrine. As a check on those whose light seemed defective Fox set up Quaker meetings—"particular," monthly, quarterly, and yearly, to which the individual was answerable. But the rejection of all creeds and confessions, even the written Word of God, as an absolute standard has handicapped Quakers in opposing the liberalism which entered their ranks.

Historians rejoice at the manner in which Quakers kept records. From the beginning, births, deaths, marriages, matters of discipline, etc., were all recorded. In this their practice was the exact opposite of the Mennonites. Another difference was in the form of their service. No one was especially ordained. The meetings were open for any one to preach or to testify. Silence was quite as good as preaching. (About a decade ago a Quaker minister conducted such a service for the Lexington, Pa., Mennonite congregation).

Persecuted by almost all groups, from the very first, the Quakers displayed great religious zeal. Preaching all over the British Isles and crossing

¹ Robert Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 78.

to the Continent of Europe they won many proselytes, including Mennonites. But in 1689 the English Quakers received toleration and their zeal gradually abated. In 1737 birthright membership was officially recognized. Children of Quakers were born into the Society. In this they resembled the Schwenkfelders.

Perhaps the greatest undertaking of the Quakers was Penn's "holy experiment," by which he opened up Pennsylvania to all people. This proved an especially appreciated asylum to the persecuted German sects such as the Mennonites. Pennsylvania was to be managed and governed by a religious group of people who believed in nonresistance. It was a bold attempt. Penn indeed was successful in his dealings with the Indians. And the Quakers did control the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1756, but they all but lost the doctrine of nonresistance in doing so.

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century there was a strong influx of Quakers to Chester, Philadelphia (including the present Montgomery) and Bucks counties in Pennsylvania. Their relations with the Mennonites in this region have been very cordial. Mennonite records are very meager. But Deacon Jacob K. Overholt (1826-1891) kept a record for many years of the visiting ministers at Deep Run. Part of his record is written in English but would have perhaps been in better form if recorded in German. Following are a few extracts, "Mr. Stokes Quaker minister of Philadelphia [preached at Deep Run] on December 3d 1870 in the afternoon . . . Edward Sharpeless Quaker minister from New Jersey on the 19th of January 1874 the same man preached in our meetinghouse in the latter part of the year 1871 or in the fore part of the year 1872 . . . Friend Stokes a Quaker minister of Philadelphia on the 1st of December 1878." And in the conference minute book of Preacher Jacob B. Mensch (1835-1912) one finds a record that the October 6, 1887 session of the Franconia Conference granted the request of the Quakers to preach in "our church." And during the World War the Mennonites and Quakers co-operated very well, especially in relief work. The last Quaker to preach at Rockhill was Wilbur K. Thomas of Philadelphia.

Quakers are now divided into three sizable groups. (Orthodox) Friends number 86,913 (1935). Many of their meetings now have pastors. The (Hicksite) Friends separated from the (Orthodox) Friends a little over a century ago on theological issues; the Hicksites holding views quite like the Unitarians; but in religious practice they even now retain the old silent meetings. They number 15,770. (Wilburite) Friends number 4,746. They separated from the Orthodox Friends about ninety years ago on religious practice, desiring to retain the silent worship and all that goes with it. In this respect they resemble the Hicksite Friends but in doctrine they adhere to what the Orthodox Friends once stood for against the Hicksites.

The Quaker meetings² of the territory covered by the Franconia Conference are a part of the Philadelphia yearly meeting. The city of Philadel-

² *Friends Year Book 1926*. Published by The Representative Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Fifteenth and Race Streets, pp. 34, 35, 41, 42.

phia has twelve meetinghouses. The Abington Quarter has the following meetinghouses: Abington (Byberry, N. J.), Gwynedd, Horsham, Norristown, Plymouth, Richland, Stroudsburg, Upper Dublin, and Warminster. The Bucks Quarter has the following meetinghouses: Bristol, Buckingham, Doylestown, Falls (Fallsington, Pa.), Langhorne, Makefield, Newtown, Plumstead, Solebury, Wrightstown, and Yardley. There are also Quaker meetinghouses at Providence and Quakertown but regular services are not conducted at either place.

THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

The Church of the Brethren is commonly known as the Dunkers or Dunkards, from the German "tunken," to dip, since they baptize by immersion. The Brethren Church was also organized as a reaction to the dearth of personal spiritual life in the state churches of Europe. The early Brethren were closely related to the Lutheran Pietists. Dr. John S. Flory says,³ "None of the leaders of the German Baptists had ever been Pietists, although they held more in common with them than with any of the other dissenting sects of the time, as the Schwenkfelders, the Mennonites, the Mystics and the like."

Their first organization was set up in the year 1708 at Schwarzenau, a little village in Westphalia, Germany. The natural leader of this group of eight was Alexander Mack (1679-1735). The English forms of the names of these eight charter members are, Alexander Mack, Anna Margarite Mack, Joanna Noetinger Bony, Andrew Bony, George Greby, Luke Vetter, John Kipping, and Joanna Kipping. The group asked Mack to baptize them. Lots were cast among the other four men. The man chosen then immersed Mack three times face forward. Whereupon Mack administered trine immersion to the other seven. The group pledged themselves to secrecy as to the name of the man who baptized Mack, lest the denomination be named for a man. Mack, Greby, Bony, and Vetter had been Reformed; Kipping a Lutheran.

The new church grew, congregations being established at several places in the Palatinate. In 1719 a part of the Crefeld congregation emigrated to America under the leadership of Peter Becker, their first American elder and a gifted singer.⁴ The colony established itself at Germantown and erected their first meetinghouse in 1770. In 1729 Elder Alexander Mack led the original Schwarzenau congregation, which had migrated in a body to West Friesland in 1720, to America. In 1733 Elder John Naas led a part of the Crefeld congregation to America. The Brethren Church in Europe then disintegrated. But in America the group prospered. The church is now divided into three groups, the (Conservative) Church of the Brethren,

³ *Literary Activity of the German Baptist Brethren in the Eighteenth Century*, Elgin, Illinois, 1908, p. 3.

⁴ Becker is buried at Klein's meetinghouse in Franconia township, near the Souder-ton-Harleysville state road. His grave is marked both by the original stone and a more prominent tombstone erected by Historian Abraham H. Cassel.

160,335 (1935) ; the (Progressive) Brethren Church, 27,520 ; Old German Baptists, about 3,000 members.

Just a few sentences can be devoted to the cloister at Ephrata, Pennsylvania. The founder was Conrad Beissel (1690-1768) who withdrew from the Brethren Church in December, 1728, and established a church of his own, having himself rebaptized. "Celibacy, the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath, the communistic system of government, the monastic system of life, and the monastic garb, together with a general air of mysticism that enveloped all their thought and actions, were the most distinct traits of this strange organization" (Flory). It was the Ephrata group who printed the 1748-49 German edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* for the Mennonites.

The Church of the Brethren accepts the Bible as the Word of God and the final rule of faith and practice, baptizes believers by trine immersion, observes feet washing and celebrates a "love feast" in connection with the Lord's Supper, observes the kiss of charity, opposes all war and all oaths. The women wear a devotional covering in worship and a garb is more or less taught. Ministers are elected. Elders in charge of each congregation are also elected, usually annually. They have been more evangelistic than the Mennonites in the past.

The Brethren are very aggressive. A number of Mennonites have been won to their group. Because of their rigid stand on immersion there has not been as much intercourse between them and the Mennonites as there has been between the Mennonites and some other groups. One amusing incident was the publication by a Brethren printer (Christopher Saur) in 1744 of Bishop Henry Funk's treatise on baptism which seems to have been more or less directed against immersion. Saur left his name off the title page.

The Church of the Brethren presents a challenge in growth to the Mennonite Church, only half as old and almost twice as large as the American Mennonite Church.

Seven Brethren Churches are in the territory covered by the Franconia Conference. Three of these, Hatfield, Indian Creek, and Mingo, are in the Eastern Pennsylvania District and four, Royersford, Pottstown, Quakertown, and Springfield, are in the Southeast Pennsylvania—New Jersey—East New York District.

BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Members of this church are commonly known as "River Brethren." Their history is very obscure. Their founder, a man named Jacob Engel, and his brother, were led to conversion by a Brethren (Dunkard) preacher, Alexander Mack. About 1770 Engel and a number of others, probably from Mennonite and Dunkard families, were baptized by trine immersion in the Susquehanna River in southern Pennsylvania. Engel may have been of Mennonite parentage, or even a Mennonite member at one time. The story of their first baptisms is similar to that of the Dunkards. This group, located

along the Susquehanna River, received the name "River" Brethren to distinguish them from other "Brethren."

The River Brethren dress a bit more plainly, at least in the Bucks-Montgomery District, than the Mennonites, some of the older men wearing beards. But they do not insist on close communion; they allow their young people more privileges and opportunities in young people's meetings and the like than the Franconia Mennonites; do not strictly prohibit life insurance for the laity; place considerable emphasis on the equality of believers; give opportunity for laymen to participate in religious meetings; encourage personal "testimonies;" and in many sections of the church teach instantaneous sanctification subsequent to conversion. They select their ministers by voting and ordain them after examination. Qualified volunteers are also ordained after examination. They are similar to the Mennonites and Dunkards in their position against war, oaths, and infant baptism. They eat a meal at communion time but not in the main auditorium. They do not attach the religious significance to this meal which the Dunkards do to their love feasts. Preachers are called elders. The presiding official in each district is called a bishop and is ordained for life.

The Brethren in Christ have only four meetinghouses in the Bucks-Montgomery District; Graterford, Stowe, Souderton, and Silverdale; no meetinghouse was erected in this district before about fifty or sixty years ago.

Only four men have served as bishop in this district; John Cassel, Henry Rosenberger, Joseph Detweiler, and Jacob K. Bowers. The first member of the denomination to settle in this district was Christian Wismer, the first deacon at Silverdale. He was ordained about 1863, when he was about forty-six years of age. Apparently the membership of this group in the Franconia region has been largely drawn from the Mennonites.

The River Brethren are now divided into three groups. The Brethren in Christ (formerly "Tunkers" in Canada), 5,519 members in 1935; Old Order Brethren in Christ (Yorkers), 472; United Zion's Children, 1,004.

The denomination has a very large force of foreign missionaries.

THE SCHWENKFELDERS

One of the most interesting Christian sects in Pennsylvania is the Schwenkfelder Group. It takes its name from Caspar Schwenkfeld (1490-1562) of Silesia, Germany. He studied "in Liegnitz and at Frankfurt, Cologne and other universities" after which he served in several courts as a courtier. The Lord touched his heart when he was yet a young man and he forsook court life; studied the Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers and the Greek language; and began to preach. He and Luther sharply disagreed on the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper and after a several days' visit, Luther wrote Schwenkfeld a fiery letter declaring that one of them, either Luther or Schwenkfeld, was the bond servant of the devil. Persecution at once set in against Schwenkfeld and his followers.

In 1542 Pilgram Marbeck, noted Mennonite leader of southern Germany wrote an "Exposition and Handbook for the church for the Right

Use of Baptism and the Lord's Supper." To this Schwenkfeld issued a *Judicium*, a Judgment on the new book of the Anabaptists. Marbeck and others then spent two years in preparing a reply to one hundred statements of Schwenkfeld. This *Verantwortung* was never published, but has been printed in modern times from the manuscript which was preserved in Zurich.

Schwenkfeld and his followers emphasized the all-importance of the inner spirit and the futility of mere external forms in religion. They opposed war and oaths, advocated separation of church and state, and in doctrine seem to have been evangelical. But Schwenkfeld did fail to establish a church organization. Therefore for his followers there was no baptism and no Lord's Supper. And one cannot lightly pass this by, by saying that in Europe the Schwenkfelders were not allowed to baptize. Neither were the Mennonites! Rebaptism was at one time forbidden on the penalty of death. But Mennonites went bravely ahead with the organization of a New Testament Church—though it cost them their lives. Schwenkfeld's position may not have been identical with that of the Quakers but he is open to criticism for his neglect of the ordinances.

By the time of his death, in spite of persecution, the followers of Schwenkfeld probably numbered 4,000 (H. W. Kriebel). But by the opening of the eighteenth century their number was reduced to less than 1500. About 1719 persecution was resumed against the Schwenkfelders most of whom lived in Silesia, Germany. On October 26, 1725 they wrote to the Dutch Mennonites asking them to intercede for them. During the following winter the Schwenkfelders fled to Saxony, Germany. And in 1734 the larger part of them migrated to Pennsylvania. They arrived at Philadelphia on September 22. On September 23 they took the declaration of allegiance to King George II of England, and the next day held their memorable day of Thanksgiving, now annually observed as their *Gedaechtnisstag*—Memorial Day. On this occasion historical and devotional addresses are given; there is singing, and prayer; and between the forenoon and afternoon sessions there is a meal of bread, butter, and applebutter.⁵

Even if persecution originally was a factor in the failure of the Schwenkfelders to organize a church, in 1734 they had no inclination to do so. Finally in 1782 an organization was effected by the adoption of a constitution. Of course ministers were elected long before. Their first American minister was George Weiss, elected November 9, 1735. Meetinghouses were erected in the following order, Hosensack, 1790; Washington, 1791; Towamencin, 1793; Kraussdale, 1825; Worcester, 1836; and Lower Salford, 1869. In 1898 a mission was established in Philadelphia, now First Schwenkfelder Church. Finally in the last quarter of the nineteenth century opportunity for baptism and communion was given. The first Schwenkfelder service to include these ordinances was held in the private home of Anthony K. Heebner in 1877.

⁵ Actually the Schwenkfelder migration to America began in 1731 and lasted until 1737. The last European Schwenkfelder died in 1826.

The Schwenkfelders are noted for their honest upright lives. They, like the Quakers, make a special effort to pay all debts, even debts not legally recognized, as in the case of those forced into bankruptcy.

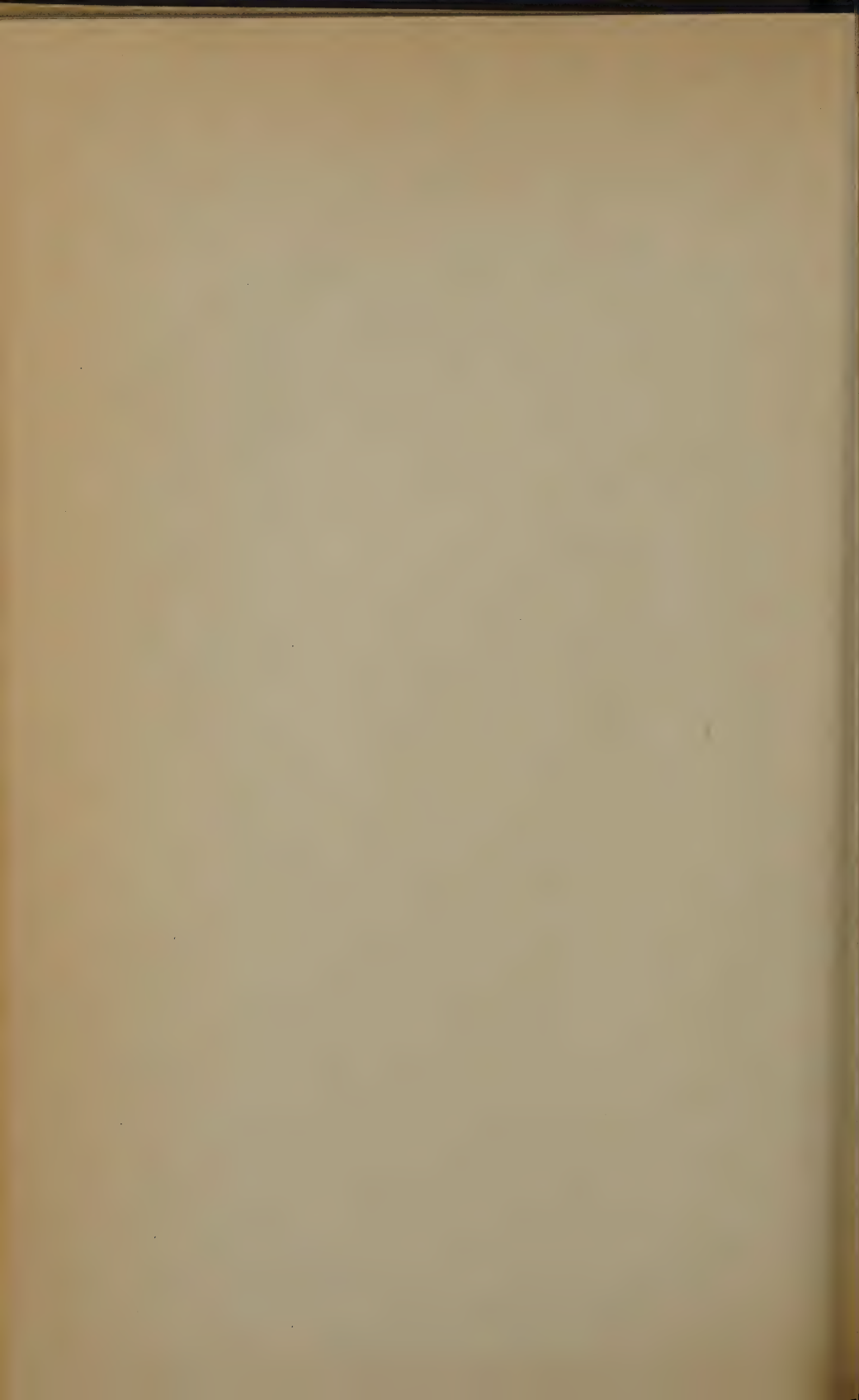
In 1892 they established Perkiomen Seminary, a private academy which many Mennonites have attended. On the campus is the Schwenkfelder Historical Library in which are many historical treasures of the Franconia Mennonites. In 1921 the several congregations of the Franconia Conference lifted offerings to help pay the debt on the Pennypacker historical library which had been purchased by the Schwenkfelder Library.

The doctrine of nonresistance was largely cast aside by them during the World War.

When H. W. Kriebel was a young man he took a census of the enrolled members of the Schwenkfelder church and found it to be less than 400! Today the church numbers 1,848 members, all located in southeastern Pennsylvania. So, in the past fifty years the Schwenkfelders have increased almost sixfold.

Although Schwenkfeld and Marbeck did disagree and write against each other, yet on nonresistance, separation of church and state, and the simple life, they did agree. When the Schwenkfelders were on their flight to America they stopped at Altona, Germany, and were cared for by a Mennonite family, named van der Smissen, for eleven days. Their relations with the Mennonites in America have been very cordial. They are not given to proselyting as some of the German sects used to be. In 1873 the Schwenkfelders gave \$214 to help the Russian Mennonites emigrate and in 1875, \$193 more for the same cause. In 1930 the Schwenkfelder Mission Board gave \$1,000 for Russian Mennonite refugee work.

Part Two
CONGREGATIONAL HISTORIES



Chapter I

GERMANTOWN

Philadelphia County

The Germantown Mennonites were rather slow in setting up a congregational organization. As was stated in Part One, Chapter Two, the greater part of the 1683 settlers were Quakers and Mennonite-Quakers. The few Mennonites were probably strongly influenced by the Quaker opposition to external ordinances; and further they were handicapped by a lack of ordained men. At first joint services were held, or as Jacob Godshalk, the Mennonite bishop, later wrote: ". . . they found it good to have exercises together."

On June 7, 1690 a Reformed minister, Rudolphus Varick, wrote a letter which indicates that by that time the Mennonites and Quakers were no longer engaging in a common worship.

I came to a German village near Philadelphia, where among others, I heard Jacob Telner, a German Quaker, preaching. The village consists of 44 families, 28 of whom are Quakers, the other 16 of the Reformed Church, among whom I spoke to those who had been received as members of the Lutherans, Mennonites, and Baptists, who are very much opposed to Quakerism, and therefore lovingly meet every Sunday when a Menist, Dirck Keyser from Amsterdam, reads a sermon from a book by Jobst Harmensen.¹

This would establish the fact that the Mennonites were worshipping apart from the Quakers as early as 1690. This agrees with the account of Bishop Godshalk. Godshalk's brief sketch, which ends abruptly in 1712, was incorporated in the 1773 Letter which is to be found in the Appendix of this book. There are two versions of this 1773 Letter, one, a copy of the original German; and the other, a copy of a Dutch translation. The Letter in the Appendix is translated from the Dutch copy. Following is a translation of the German copy. There are slight variations between the two.

The beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ which is called Mennonite, took place on this wise at Germantown. A number of friends out of Holland and other places in Germany here came together. Now the most of these were Quakers, so they [the Mennonites] could not agree with them, and they began to have a meeting, although as sheep without a shepherd. Since they had no preacher, they endeavored to

¹ N. H. Keyser, *Old Historic Germantown*, Lancaster, Pa., 1906, p. 63; quoted in the article by Dr. Harold S. Bender, "The Founding of the Mennonite Church in America at Germantown, 1683-1708," in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., October, 1933, p. 230. (Hereafter this Journal will be referred to as the *M. Q. R.*). For the settlement of Germantown by the Mennonites see Part I, Chapter II, of this volume.

admonish one another. Later, in the year 1698 [the Dutch copy has 1690; this would seem to be more probably correct] others of our brethren in the faith came in from Crefeld and other places in that country. They met with us for meeting in the house of Isaac Jacobs van Bebber. These last-named friends together with the earlier group, considered it to be better for the edification of the church to choose by election a preacher and a deacon. Thereupon, the first ministers were chosen, namely as preacher, William Rittenhouse, born in Mongowerland, and as deacon, Jan Neuss from Crefeld. The above named preacher then began to minister to the church.

A second election was held on October 8, 1702, to choose two additional preachers, when Jacob Gottschalk from Goch, and Hans Neuss from Crefeld were chosen. These two ministered to the church by reading only. Later, strife arose between Hans Neuss and Arnold van Vossen, for Hans Neuss believed himself to have been wronged, so he withdrew from the church and never reunited with the church throughout his life.

In the year 1707 a number of brethren came to us from the Palatinate. They kept to themselves for the space of an entire year. On February 18, 1708, the first chosen minister, William Rittenhouse, died, to the great sorrow of the church. That left only Jacob Gottschalk to minister to the church and he did so only by reading. At this time the Palatinate brethren united with us, and the entire church considered it advisable for the upbuilding of the church, to choose three men as deacons or overseers of the church. This was done on March 22, 1708, when Isaak van Sintern, Heinrich Cassel, and Conrad Jansen were chosen. A month later, on the 20th of April, two preachers were chosen, namely, Harmen Karsdorp and Martin Kolb.

Thereupon the members of the church, at that time consisting of a total of 34 brothers and sisters including preachers and deacons, together with their ministers, considered it advisable that those who had applied for membership should be baptized. It fell to Jacob Gottschalk to do this; and so the first members to be taken into our church in this country by baptism were received, eleven in number. [The Dutch copy says this occurred on May 9.] Consequently, the church grew to forty-five members in size. On the 23rd of May we celebrated with one another the memorial of the bitter suffering and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to His ordinance and the practise of His apostles.

In 1709 more brethren and sisters came to us from the Palatinate. Consequently, by April 6, 1712, our church at Germantown and as far as Skippack had grown to the extent that it consisted of ninety-nine members in number.

Another early letter of historical value was written in March, 1702, by the bishop and ministers of the Mennonite congregation at Hamburg-Altona, Germany, to a member of the Germantown Mennonite congregation, Claes Berends. "Berends had written to the ministers at Altona, his former congre-

gation, reporting the lack of a bishop in the new settlement which prevented them from having baptism or communion services. Berends' suggestion that someone be sent from Germany to ordain a bishop was rejected as impracticable because of the rigors of the long journey thither. The Altona ministers advised rather that the congregation in Germantown proceed with its own ministers to the administration of the rites of baptism and communion when necessary, pointing to the example of Philip in the New Testament who, though a deacon, yet baptized the Ethiopian, and Paul, who though not commissioned to baptize, yet did so."²

And thus it appears that almost twenty-five years elapsed between the settling of Germantown and the first Mennonite baptismal and communion services. And even then there is no record of the formal ordination of a bishop. Godshalk himself says that William Rittenhouse was ordained to the ministry in 1690 (1698?). On October 8, 1702 Jacob Godshalk and Hans Nice were chosen preachers. Because of a personal grievance Nice permanently forsook the church. It has been held that Dirck Keyser was a Mennonite preacher. But it should be noted that Godshalk never speaks of Dirck Keyser at all, and in 1690 when Keyser was reading sermons to the Mennonites, Godshalk says they were then without a preacher. And when a preacher was finally ordained, it was not Keyser, but Rittenhouse. Similarly the usual statement that Rittenhouse was the first bishop seems to have no foundation in fact. Indeed the following letter makes it clear that although Rittenhouse actually had decided to go ahead and baptize the eleven applicants, he died before he got it accomplished.

Very worthy, and from the heart beloved friends, Hermanus Schyn and co-ministers of the Mennonite Churches in Holland, and to whom this letter may come, who stand with us united in faith as workers in the spiritual vineyard of the Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be with you from the mercy of God with the help of the Holy Ghost; and to all those who fear the Lord may much good and comfort and the eternal inheritance of eternal life be wished.

Your very welcome writing of April 16, 1707, signed by the ministers of Hamburg and Altona and by you and with your full approval, has come to hand. We have well understood your good instruction, and the letter gave us sufficient answer and was with joy received by our aged preacher, Willem Rittinghuysen. He was accordingly fully resolved to serve with baptism upon their desire those who were requesting it and had requested it. However, the Lord laid him and his wife on a sickbed and in a few days he was taken from us, which was a painful loss to us. And about two or three days before his departure he gave a brief admonition, and taking his leave of the brethren fell asleep in the Lord, he being . . . 64 and [and she] 66 years old. His going was a grievous experience to us. Let me say, as it stands in the Revelation of John 14:13, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" and as

² Dr. Harold S. Bender, *M. Q. R.*, October, 1933, p. 229. This letter is reproduced in the Appendix of this volume.

a certain poet says, "Sleep then my friend in God who lives until that joyous day—till when thy God who can do all things again will give life."

We had then not more than one who served us by reading a sermon, which so much more caused sorrow among us; and having called upon the Lord about it, we found it advisable to wait in hope that the Lord might again raise one up for us. We therefore chose two as preachers, and two [three] as deacons, of whom one has already given for us two sermons to the satisfaction of the brotherhood. I hope that the Lord will grant His grace and blessing further. So we went ahead with the administration of baptism to those who desired it. There were eleven men and women added to the church by baptism. We entreat them earnestly and kindly, since we hear from the brethren who recently have come here that there is a preacher who is inclined to come over, that you will keep us in mind and be helpful to them [him] on their [his] way, unto the propagation of the church here which should have a great increase in time. We shall thankfully recognize your love and kindness since we learn from the brethren that he was embued with such zeal and earnestness. By the request of the ministers of Hamburg, Peter Kolb was named to choose a bishop. We also intend to correspond with the ministers of Hamburg.

Now our loving and friendly request to the ministers would be for some catechisms for the children and little Testaments for the youth. The members here are poorly supplied with psalm-books. And we have here no Bible in the meetinghouse. Some have a small Bible. So that each has not more than one Bible and cannot well spare it. We dare not prescribe the number for you but leave it to your inclination and love. The congregation here is still rather weak to have anything printed. It would cost a great sum to have printing done here, and both here and in New York printing is in English. Hence we, or rather our aged friend and preacher, Willem Rittinghuysen, wrote to New York to have the articles of faith printed in English because there are people here who call themselves Mennists who would like to have our articles translated into English.³ But they asked so much that our congregation could not raise it. When the people from Germany come here they have spent everything on the journey and then have to start new. This is hard at first. Some buy a piece of land and have to build a house on it. What they need more than this for their necessities they all have to work to pay. As ministers, we wish that what comes from [the sale of] the books that are left over be given to the poor; we ought to be grateful for the sake of the poor.

But the time and opportunity is getting short and a friend is waiting to depart. We request then heartily that the brethren remember us in sincere prayer that the Lord be with us in these foreign regions, and

³ These "Mennists" were probably Dutch Mennonites who had come to New Amsterdam (New York) as early as 1640, and later, and who were by the time of this letter English-speaking. They wanted to know what these Germantown settlers were, theologically.

that He may strengthen us with His Spirit to the upbuilding of the church and to the salvation of our souls.

Herewith we close and, with hearty greetings from us, commit all the ministers and brethren to the keeping and protection of Almighty God. Your friends and brethren in Christ,

Jacob Gaetshalck
Harmen Karsdorp
Martin Kolb.

We request from you some time a letter which would be very agreeable and welcome to us.

Isaac van Sintern
Conradt Jansen.^{3a}

What a season of growth and refreshing the year 1708 brought to the Germantown Mennonites! First of all the Palatine Mennonites united with their Dutch brethren. On March 22 three deacons were chosen; on April 20, two preachers were ordained; on May 9 Jacob Godshalk baptized the first applicants; and two weeks later the congregation first partook of the Lord's Supper! And although Arnold van Vossen as early as February 10, 1703 had deeded three perches of land to Jan Nice for the congregation to erect a meetinghouse, it was not until 1708 that the log structure was built.⁴

But we must return to the 1708 letter. There is a vague statement in it concerning Peter Kolb and the choosing of a bishop. Peter Kolb was a Mennonite minister living near Mannheim, Germany. He was a brother of Martin Kolb, and lived 1671-1727. He never came to America. The Dutch of the sentence under consideration is ambiguous. It is not clear whether Kolb was appointed to choose a bishop, or whether he himself was chosen to be a bishop. Suppose the latter meaning be accepted, does this mean that Kolb was delegated to go to America as a bishop? Or, taking the other meaning does it mean that Kolb chose a bishop by lot in Europe from names sent him by mail from Germantown? Curiously enough there was a tradition current among the Franconia Mennonites about a century ago that the first minister at Germantown had been chosen by lot in Europe! This story is preserved in a letter which Preacher Jacob Krehbiel of near Buffalo, New York, wrote to his friends in the Palatinate in 1841. He writes:

At this point, I wish to follow the account which I received from several of the oldest men in the Mennonite congregations in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of my visit there in 1839. The essence of this account is as follows:

Among all the members of the Germantown congregation at the above-mentioned time there was no one who had previously been chosen as preacher by the lot. Since they wished to follow strictly our traditional regulations in this matter, they were not willing to ordain a

^{3a} Translated by Dr. Bender and published in the *M. Q. R.*, January, 1933, pp. 44-46.

⁴ On September 6, 1714 van Vossen and his wife Mary granted an additional thirty-five perches of land in trust for the congregation to Henry Sellen and John Neus.

preacher on their own authority. They went only so far as to take votes for a preacher. These votes they sent across the ocean to their old home in Europe to their brethren in the faith with the request that their preachers cast the lot and then ordain the minister thus chosen, whereupon they were to send back to America a report of their work. This took place and accordingly the first preacher of the Mennonites in America was chosen several thousand miles distant from the congregation, in another part of the world, a procedure which should be well-recorded in history because of its unusualness. Among those who told me this story was a bishop⁵ of Lower Salford, named Lederach who said that the documents dealing with this matter were still preserved in Germantown and since the congregation in that town was practically facing dissolution at this time he had often come to the thought that he should ask that the papers be handed over in order that they might be preserved in one of our congregations in Montgomery County. When I asked whether they would surrender these papers to them he answered, 'Without hesitation.' Whereupon I urged him to do this without delay because of the remarkableness of the whole affair. That the congregation in Germantown was facing dissolution was due to the fact that the number of members there had greatly declined and that at the present time only now and then was divine service conducted in the English language. The congregation was without any particular connection with the congregations in the neighboring counties.⁶

But before placing too much weight on this tradition one must remember that even in 1839 the story was about a century and a half old. Supposing the story as reported by Krehbiel is substantially correct, to whom does it refer? Does it refer to the ordination of Rittenhouse? Godshalk's account is absolutely silent on the point, if indeed the story be true. Or might it refer to an ordination of Godshalk as bishop? Godshalk's account would certainly not lead one to such conclusion. And does the story have any connection with the Peter Kolb referred to in the 1708 letter? At the present time all hope of a positive identification must be given up.

The Germantown ministers and deacons in 1708 thought that their church "should have a great increase, in time." But the great increase was in the country districts, not in Germantown. The great mass of the Mennonite immigrants from 1709 on were Swiss and Palatine farmers who passed by the town congregation and settled on farms in Bucks and Philadelphia counties. Even the Germantown preachers moved to Skippack; Martin Kolb went in 1709 and Jacob Godshalk a few years later, in 1712 or 1713.

The appeal of the Germantown Mennonites to their Brethren in Holland (1708) met with success. In 1712 the Dortrecht Confession of Faith (1632) was printed in English in Amsterdam for use in America. This Confession of Faith was not intended for the use of the Germantown or Skippack Mennonites, for they were German-speaking. But the edition was

⁵ Deacon John Lederach, 1775-1848.

⁶ *M. Q. R.*, January, 1932, pp. 49, 50.

probably printed for distribution among their English-speaking neighbors—to make known the doctrines of the Mennonites. In 1727 Andrew Bradford of Philadelphia issued a reprint of the 1712 edition and in it included “An Appendix to the Confession of Faith of the Christjans, called, Mennonists. Giving a short and full account of them; because of the Imagination of the newness of our Religion, the Weapon and Revengeless Christendom, and its being. Published Formerly in the Low-Dutch, and translated out of the same into High-Dutch, and out of that into the English Language, 1725.” On page forty-four of this appendix is a statement to which sixteen Mennonite “elders” from eastern Pennsylvania subscribed.

We the hereunder written Servants of the Word of God, and Elders in the Congregation of the People called, *Mennonists*, in the Province of *Pennsylvania*, do acknowledge, and herewith make known, That we do own the afore-going *Confession*, *Appendix*, and *Menno's* Excusation, to be according to our Opinion: and also, have took the same to be wholly ours. In Testimony whereof, and that we believe the same to be good, we have here unto Subscribed our names.

Evidently there was a conference of at least sixteen ministers (were they all bishops?) in 1725. This is the first known Mennonite Conference in America. These men represented the following settlements: Skippack, Germantown, Conestoga (Lancaster), Great Swamp, and “Manatant” (a tract extending through the eastern end of Berks County; it seems that this term later included also the Coventry and Vincent congregations).

So far the ordination of five preachers has been noted. Rittenhouse died in 1707; Nice left the church soon after 1702; Godshalk and Kolb moved to Skippack, 1709-12. Nothing further is known of Karsdorp; perhaps he also died before 1725. The preachers who signed for Germantown in 1725 were John Gorgas, John Conerads (1681-1758), and Claes Rittinghausen (1666-1734). Claes was the son of Preacher William Rittenhouse.

After 1725 the history of the congregation is obscure. In 1770 the present stone meetinghouse was built at a cost of two hundred two pounds and five shillings.⁷ At that time the congregation numbered but twenty-five; in 1789, forty-six.⁷ In 1774 a Franconia minister moved to a home along the Willow Grove road, Cheltenham township, and united with the Germantown congregation. His name was Jacob Funk, 1730-1816. He must not have preached there when he became aged, for in 1796 the congregation was being supplied by Mennonite preachers from the (Franconia) Conference. This is evident from a letter written October 27, 1796 by Jacob Oberholtzer of “frankony” to Abraham Kolb of Germantown. A postscript by A. Kolb reads:

. . . I would inform you that on November 6, Jacob Gross will come to you to conduct your services, if the Lord will . . .

Further I would inform you that lot has been cast to decide which of the ministers shall conduct the services in Germantown, and also the time when each one shall serve:

⁷ Daniel K. Cassel, *History of the Mennonites*, Philadelphia, 1888, pp. 107 ff.

December 4, 1796, Abraham Oberholtzer
 January 1, 1797, Henrich Pannebecker
 January 29, 1797, David Ruth
 February 26, 1797, Joseph Schowalder
 March 26, 1797, Henrich Hunsicker
 April 23, 1797, Jacob Oberholtzer
 May 21, 1797, John Hoch
 June 18, 1797, Abrah. Wissmer
 July 16, 1797, Jacob Gross
 August 13, 1797, Matthes Pannabecker
 September 10, 1797, Christian Haldeman
 October 8, 1797, Johannes Berge.⁸

Bishop Andrew Ziegler of Skippack administered communion at Germantown on May 31, 1789.⁹ And as the above letter indicates in 1797 the monthly services were conducted by visiting ministers from the Franconia Conference. By 1839 the congregation was "facing dissolution." This was evidently about the time John Minnich preached there. Minnich lived at Dolly Lane Corner, near Shoemakertown (Cheltenham township, Montgomery county) and was the last German preacher. He bitterly opposed the introduction of English into the services. It is said that he "came to the meeting on horseback with his wife, Nanny, riding on behind."⁹ "Of Heinrich Hunsicker, who lived at Skippack, it is said that it was a common occurrence to see him go out into the fields at two o'clock on Sunday morning and bring a horse from the pasture. Putting a straw saddle on the horse, he, with his wife seated behind him, would ride to Germantown, both on one horse, a distance of some twenty miles. After preaching they would return home the same way."⁹ Minnich was succeeded as pastor by George Hellerman, an English preacher. According to tradition Hellerman and Minnich did not always have pleasant relations. Hellerman must have been ordained about 1836, for he preached over thirty years,¹⁰ and died in 1867. He lived in Germantown as preacher about seven years.¹¹ Not only did Jacob Krehbiel in his letter (cited above) say that in 1839 the congregation was "facing dissolution," but also "only now and then was divine service conducted in the English language." That must have referred to Hellerman's preaching. The congregation was also (in 1839) "without any particular connection with the congregations in the neighboring counties." Deacon John Funk of Germantown died in 1837. Evidently the congregational organization broke down when Hellerman moved to Chester county, or when Minnich died. But a few families who had been members of the congregation remained to

⁸ 1911 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 22-24. The spelling of the proper names was revised from a photostatic reproduction of the letter in the Library of the Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

⁹ N. B. Grubb, *The Mennonite Church of Germantown*, Philadelphia, 1906.

¹⁰ *Herald of Truth*, Elkhart, Ind., May, 1867.

¹¹ Daniel K. Cassel, *History of the Rittenhouse Family*, Part II, Germantown, Philadelphia, 1895, p. 103; yet N. B. Grubb states that Hellerman succeeded Minnich about the middle of the century. Perhaps Minnich died about that time.

unite with the new organization created in 1863, so that the congregation has maintained a continuity from 1690 to the present date. This revival of the work by a different group of Mennonites will be taken up in a later chapter (Part V, Chapter II).

Thus ends the story of the first permanent Mennonite settlement in America. The congregation has produced some worthy sons, but it never prospered numerically. Indeed American Mennonitism has generally not prospered in cities during the past. Today as one drives down Germantown Avenue he passes a little stone meetinghouse at about number 6127. There is the cradle of American Mennonitism! There William Rittenhouse preached at the beginning of the eighteenth century; there Jacob Godshalk administered communion; there is a building scarred by bullets fired in the battle of Germantown; and there a little band of worshipers have assembled for centuries. One cannot help wondering if something could not have been done to have prevented the collapse of the organization a few generations ago. Suppose the congregation were now in the Franconia Conference, would it not be appropriate for the conference to assemble in the historic meetinghouse at least occasionally? We can never thrive if we cut altogether loose from the past. May we perpetuate the faith of the Germantown pioneers.

Chapter II

SKIPPACK

Skippack Township, Montgomery County

The Mennonite settlement at Skippack was begun in 1702. Every year additional settlers located in "Bebber's Township"—so named after the Mennonite purchaser of the six-thousand-acre tract, Matthias Van Bebbler.¹ For a number of years the Skippack Mennonites were considered as belonging to the Germantown congregation. But as early as 1709 Preacher Martin Kolb had moved to the Skippack settlement. Three or four years later Bishop Jacob Godshalk followed. On June 18, 1717 Van Bebbler and his wife upon the receipt of fifteen pounds and in consideration of "the true and singular affection he, the said Matthias Van Bebbler bears to them and all theirs" conveyed one hundred acres² of land to seven trustees, Henry Sellen, Claus Jansen, Henry Kolb, Martin Kolb, Michael Ziegler, Jacob Kolb, and Hermannus Kuster. This land was given in trust that "it shall be lawful for all and every the inhabitants of the aboves'd Bebbler's Township to build a school house and fence in a sufficient burying place upon the herein granted one hundred acres of land there to have their children and those of their respective families taught and instructed, and to bury their dead." This was later the scene of Christopher Dock's activities!

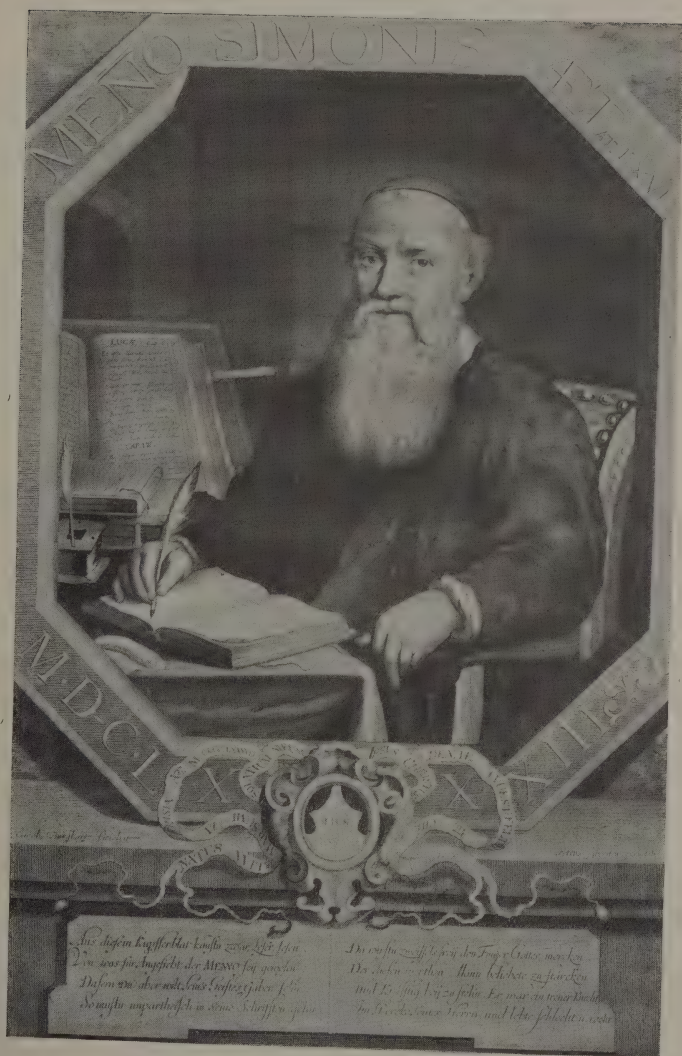
On March 30, 1725 the seven Mennonite trustees executed a declaration of trust in which they recited the conditions of the original deed, attempted to extend its purposes so that the land could be used for the poor of the meeting, and for the erection of a Mennonite meetinghouse. Further only members in good standing in the meeting could serve as trustees. The meetinghouse was probably erected in 1725, the second one in what is now the Franconia Conference, the first one having been Germantown (1708). This meetinghouse stood in the northwest part of the burying ground.³

The first officials were Preachers Jacob Godshalk and Martin Kolb. It should be mentioned that Godshalk, ordained at Germantown October 8, 1702, seems to have been a very vigorous leader, both in the church and the community. His name heads the list of a great many documents both ecclesiastical and civil. At the 1725 conference his name headed the list of subscribers to the Dortrecht Articles of Faith. The other signers in 1725 for

¹ See Dr. William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 1935, pp. 215, 254, 397; also, Dr. Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker: "Bebber's Township and the Dutch Patroons of Pennsylvania," Reprinted from the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, January, 1907. Details regarding the first settlers are given in Part I, Chapter II, of this volume.

² In two fifty-acre tracts; fifty acres had been sold in 1708 to Hermanus Kuster, but Bebbler bought it back and sold the whole 100 acres to the Mennonites for a nominal sum.

³ Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pa.*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 1025.

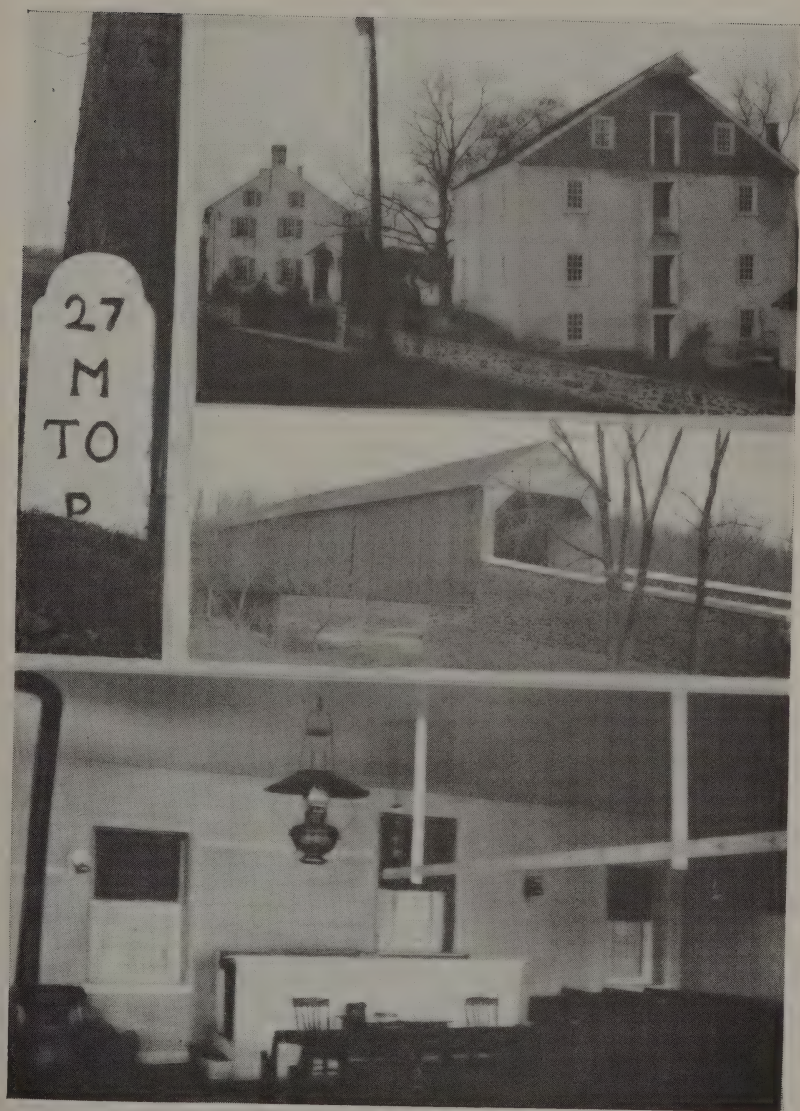


Courtesy of The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

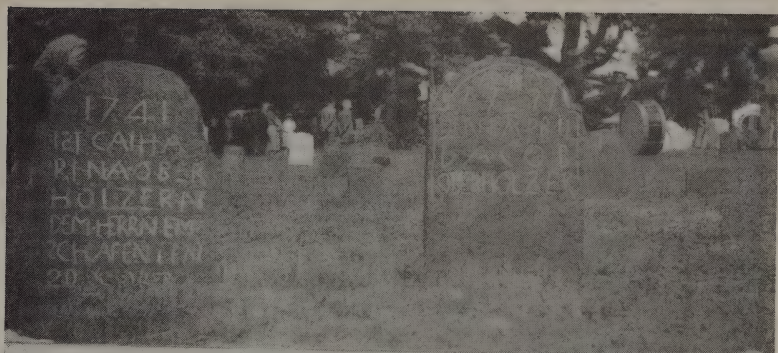
Menno Simons, 1496-1561

A Portrait Made by Jacob Burghart in the Year 1683

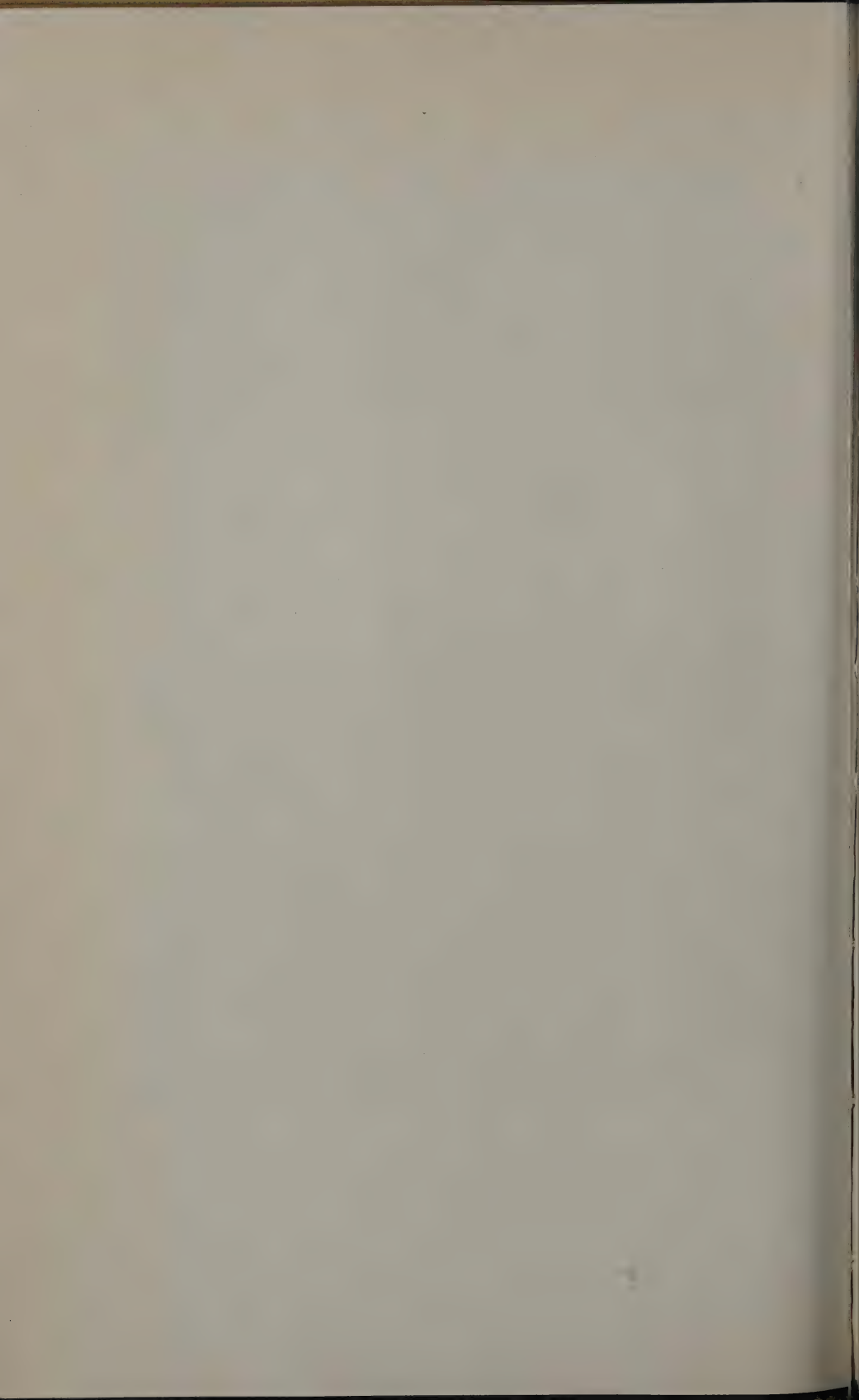
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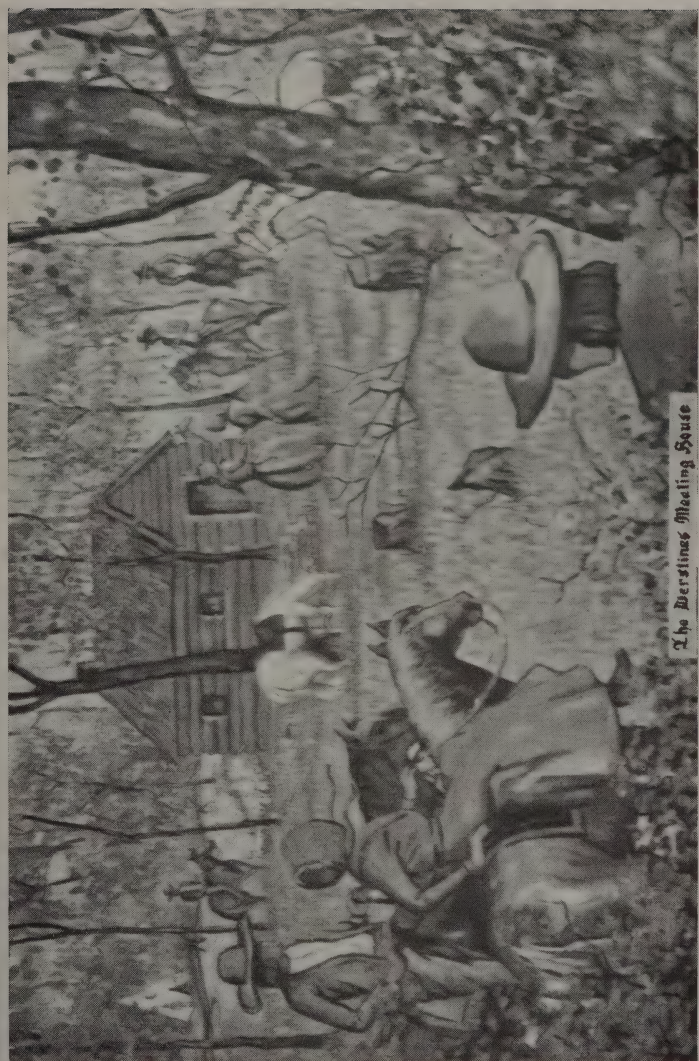


Old Milestone, Harleysville, Pa. Typical Mill, Telford, Pa. Covered Bridge, Finland, Pa. Interior of the Worcester Meetinghouse



A 1741 Gravestone, Towamencin Mennonite Burying Ground. Old Pump, Finland, Pa. Abandoned Log House, Finland, Pa.

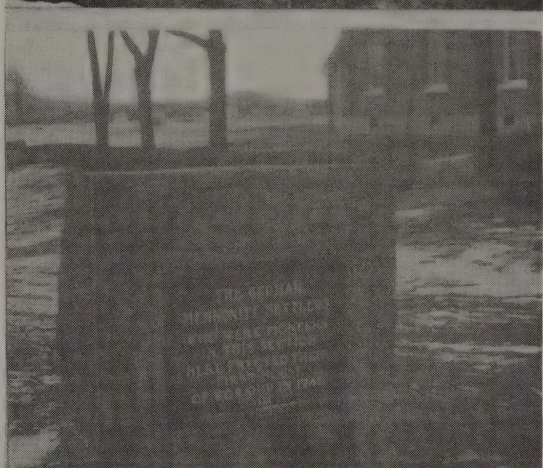




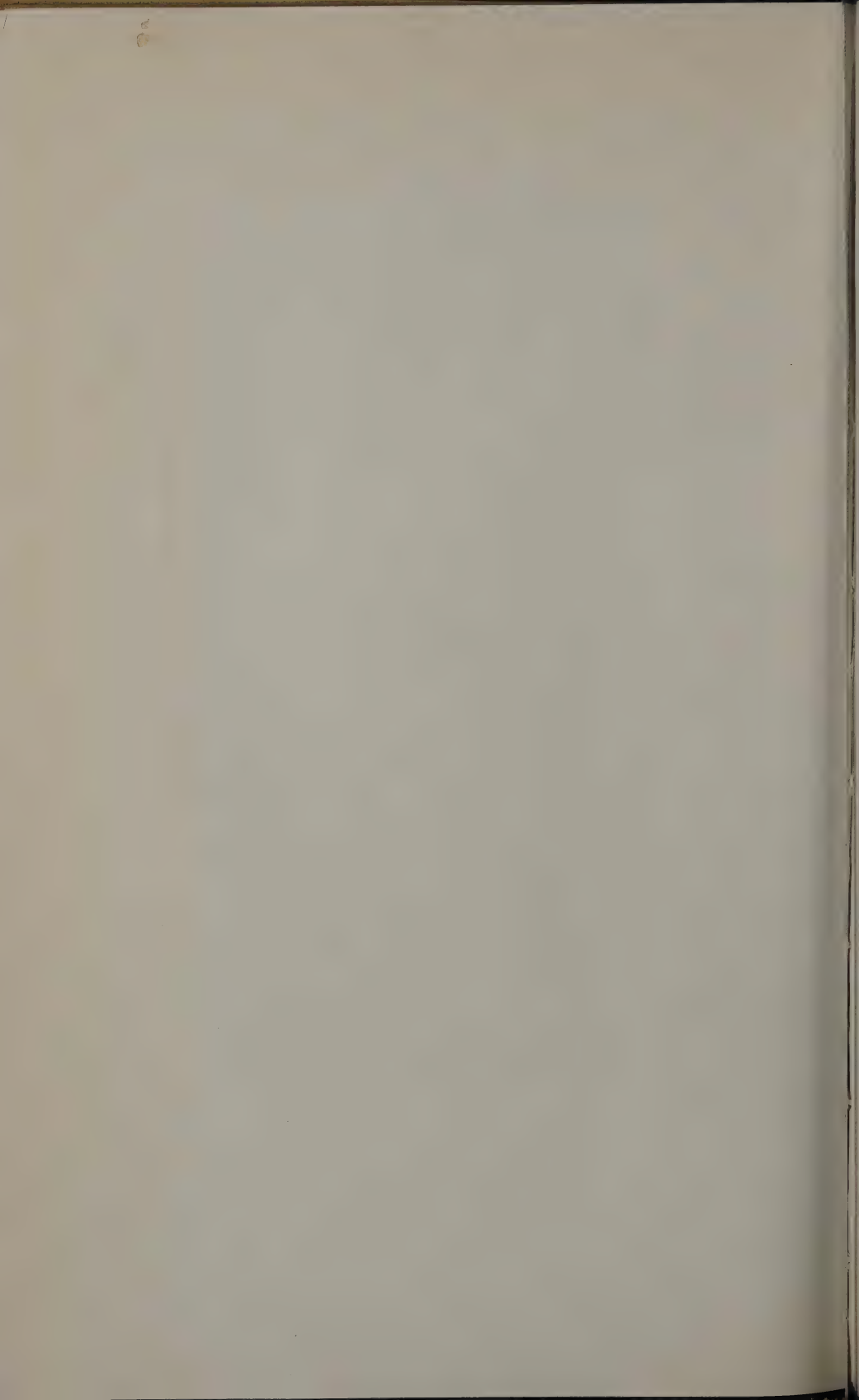
Courtesy of Kolb-Kulp-Culp Family.

Sketch of the First Rockhill Meetinghouse by Marvin G. Detweiler, Telford, Pa.





Derstines' Mill, Sellersville, Pa. John D. Souder at
the Grave of S. W. Pennypacker, Phoenixville,
Pa. Monument at the Upper Milford Men-
nonite Meetinghouse, Zionsville, Pa.

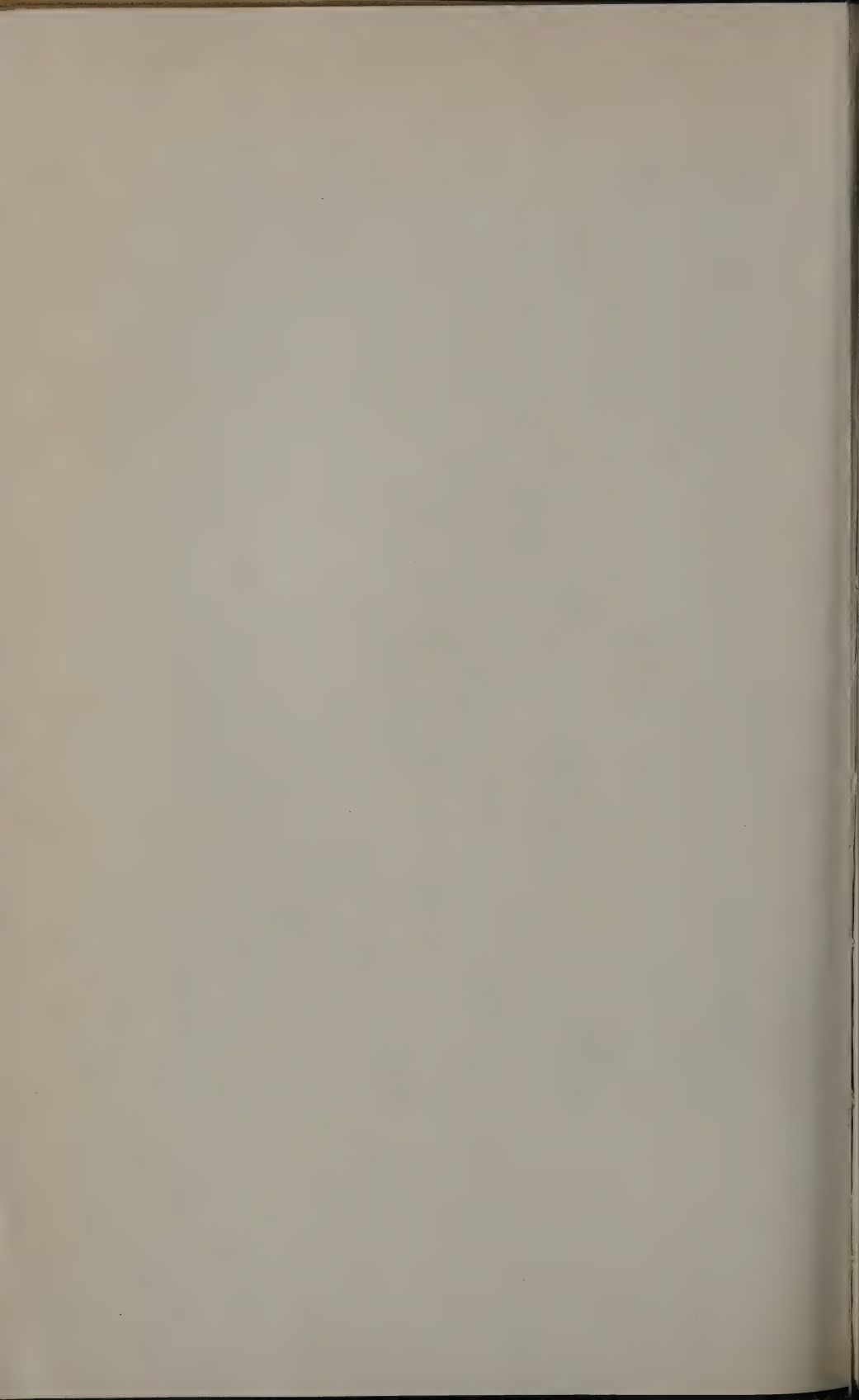


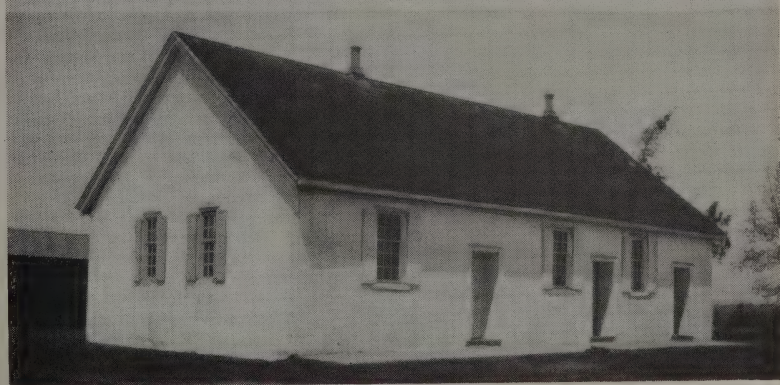


Germantown Meetinghouse, Built 1770; Enlarged 1916

Lower Skippack Meetinghouse, Built 1844

Saucon Meetinghouse, Built 1847(?)

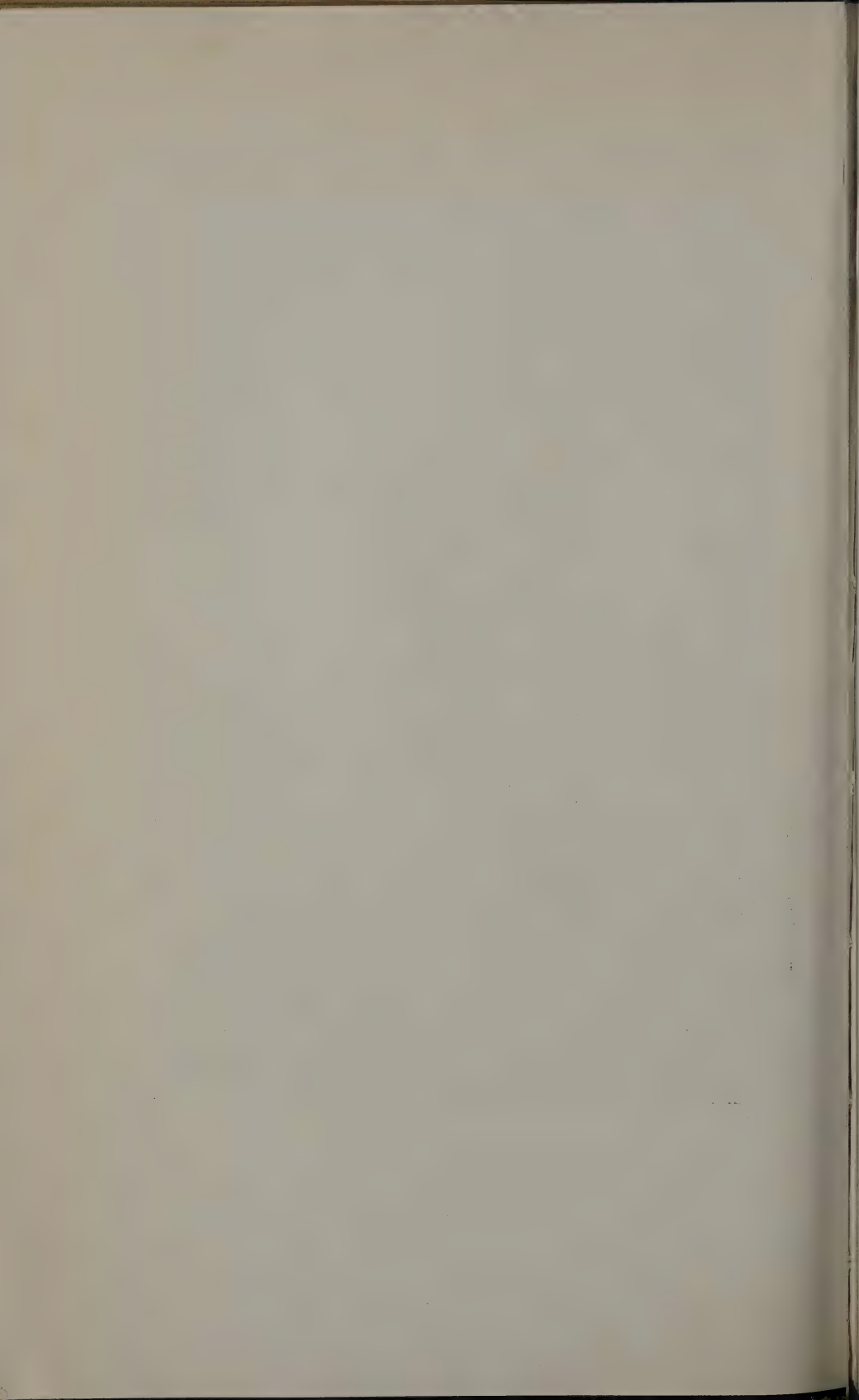




Upper Skippack Meetinghouse, Built 1848

Worcester Meetinghouse, Built 1873

Providence Meetinghouse, Built about 1815; Enlarged —

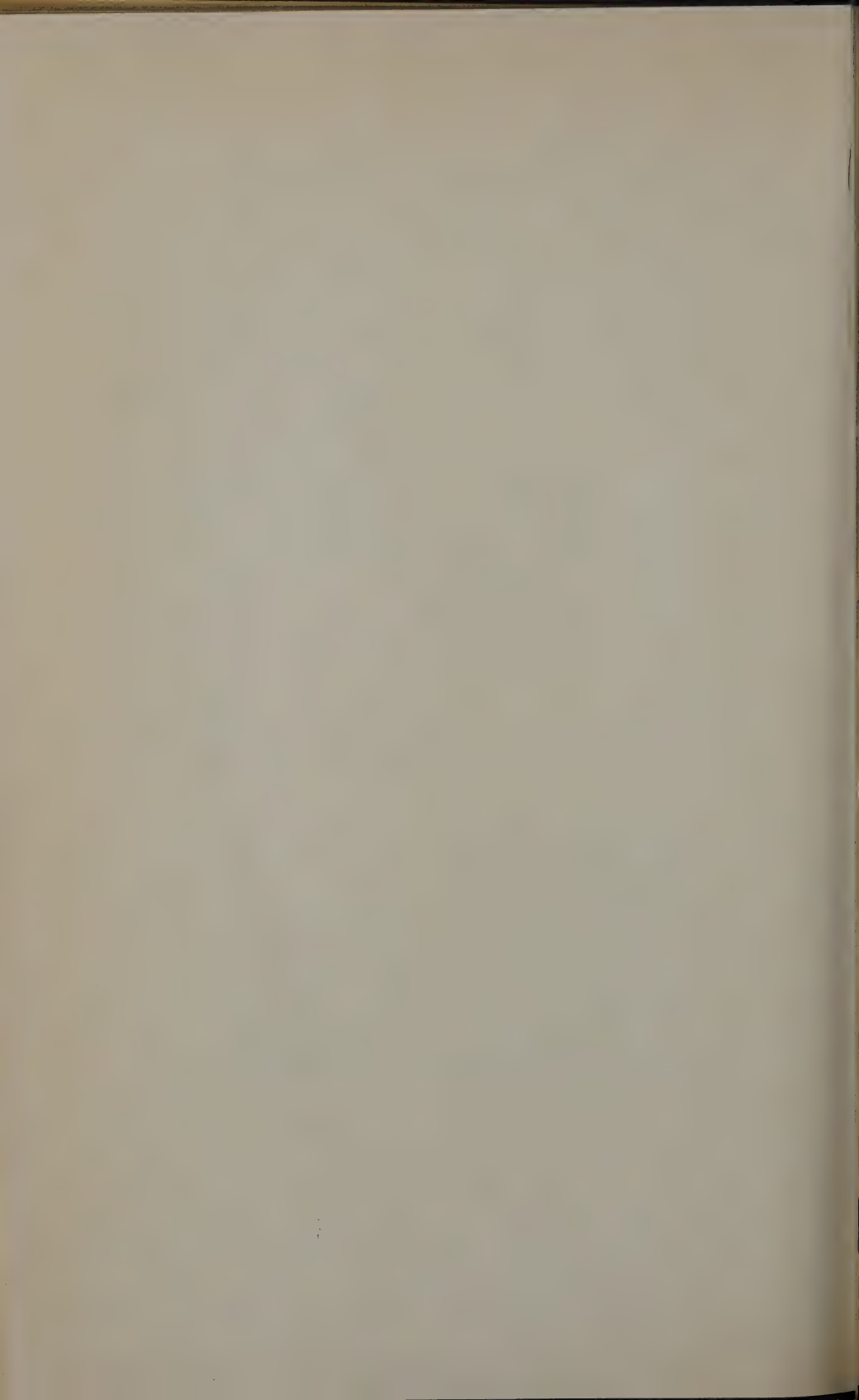




Springfield Meetinghouse, Built 1824

Coventry Meetinghouse, Built 1798; Rebuilt 1890

Vincent Meetinghouse, Built 1889



"Shipack" were: (Preacher) Henry Kolb (d. 1730); (Preacher) Martin Kolb (1680-1761) ordained at Germantown April 20, 1708; (Preacher) Claes Jansen (1658-1745); and (Preacher) Michael Ziegler (c. 1680-c. 1764). Already Skippack was the leading settlement in the district. Old people used to refer to this conference district as "Skippack."

In 1738 the officials of the congregation began to make entries of the alms monies received and to record annual audits of the same in a book. This book has been in continuous use ever since. And though the seceders from conference in 1847 did take the woodland, farm, and meetinghouse, the part of the congregation which stood by conference managed to retain this historic treasure. The book measures about eight and one-eighth by six and one-fourth by one and one-eighth inches. It is bound in a thin leather which was probably a pale yellow two centuries ago. Today it is buff in color. The edge of one of the covers has a small aperture through which passes a leather thong about three feet in length. When the book is closed the thong is wrapped about it and the book is tied shut by a knot secured in the thong. On the outside cover is beautifully inscribed: DER MENONISTEN: ODER TAUFS⁴ GESINDEN GEMEINE BUCH: VOR DIE GEMEINDE IN BEBBERSTAUN ANNO DOMMINI 1738. The writing is in German script until 1897. For another decade after 1897 the language remained German although Latin script was used. Since 1909 all audits are in English. All financial statements were given in pounds, shillings, and pence until 1823. A record of expenditures was kept for the first few decades. The chief value of the book is that it furnishes a list of all the ordained men of the Skippack "circuit" since 1738. Unfortunately there is no way to distinguish preachers from deacons; also, laymen sometimes signed.⁵

One previously unknown fact which the book brings to light is that Jacob Kolb (1685-1739), brother of Preachers Henry, Martin, and Dielman, evidently was a Mennonite deacon. On page two there is an entry which speaks of an audit on December 26, 1738 of the "rechnung welches Jacob Kolb geführet wegen dem geld." If Jacob Kolb kept the alms monies he most probably was a deacon. He was accidentally killed at work October 4, 1739. The signers of the first audit are Martin Kolb, Class Janson, Yilles Kassell, Jacob Greder, and Michael Ziegler. Likely Kassell and Greder were ordained between 1725 and 1738; they were evidently preachers, at least it is believed that Kassell was.⁶ Although it appears from the list of signers of the 1727 Confession of Faith that Michael Ziegler was a minister, he did have charge of the alms funds 1739-1741, 1753-1760. Valentine Hunsicker evidently succeeded Jacob Kolb as deacon for he served as treasurer 1742-

⁴ Of this word only TAU is clear; the other letters are faded.

⁵ A much more complete description of the book, with typical audits and an alphabetical arrangement of the signers, written by the present author, appeared in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, April, 1936, under the title "The Alms Book Of The Skippack Mennonite Church." However the lists given below are a bit more reliable than those in the earlier article.

⁶ Daniel K. Cassel: *A Genealogical History of the Cassel Family*, Norristown, Pa., 1896, p. 255.

1752, 1761-1770; he began signing the audits in 1739 and died in 1771. Preacher Jacob Schumacher signed already in 1742, but the 1773 letter (in the Appendix) states that he was ordained in 1746. Andrew Ziegler was also ordained to the ministry in 1746 and made bishop on May 30, 1762. He died by 1797. Preachers Henry Kolb (the second of that name) (1721-1783) and Dielman Kolb (1719-1799) were both ordained in 1752. Deacon Isaac Hunsicker began signing in 1764, and Deacon John Kassel in 1767. Deacon Henry Kassel began signing in 1792. (These three men served as treasurers.) Valentine's son, Henry, began signing in 1781; soon after being chosen preacher he was ordained bishop, and ably led his congregation until his death in 1836. Preacher Isaac Kassel began signing in 1774, he died in 1823. Bishop Henry Hunsicker's son, John, was ordained in 1812 or before. He was later chosen bishop and was the senior bishop of the conference in 1847. He seceded, and died a month later. William Z. Gottshall was ordained deacon of the newly-formed congregation at Schwenksville in 1818. He was the only Franconia Conference member ordained in that congregation. The pulpit was supplied by the ministers from Skippack every four weeks. In the division of 1847 Gottshall seceded; his son Moses H. later became a leading bishop of the seceding group. Preacher Matthias Rittenhouse (1770-1832) signed the audits 1820-1831. Deacon Abraham Hendricks signed 1822-1834, and was a treasurer intermittently from 1822-32. Preacher Henry Bean signed from 1824 to 1830; his office was removed for "some irregularity."⁷ Deacon Johannes Kratz of the Skippack congregation (1782-1872) began signing in 1825. Preacher Elias Landes (1796-1863) was ordained in 1831. Deacon John Gotwals (c. 1788-1877) of the Providence congregation began signing in 1833. Preacher Abraham Wismer (1797-1877) was ordained in 1838. Deacon John Landis (1801-1860) of the Skippack congregation began to sign in 1837. Deacon Isaac Longacre (1803-1879) of the Worcester congregation began signing in 1841. Abraham Hunsicker was ordained to the ministry on January 1, 1847. He was the brother of Bishop John, son of Bishop Henry, and grandson of Deacon Valentine.

In the division of 1847 Bishop John Hunsicker and Preacher Abraham Hunsicker of the Skippack congregation, and Deacon William Z. Gottshall of the Schwenksville congregation, seceded from the Franconia Conference. Preachers Elias Landes and Abraham Wismer, and Deacons John Kratz, John Gotwals, John Landes, and Isaac Longacre remained loyal to conference.

Perhaps an explanation is in order at this point. The Skippack bishop district has retained the "circuit-system" which evidently obtained in all the districts at first. Ministers are not specifically assigned to any one congregation. The ministers as a group are responsible for all the congregations in the district. Hence the ordinations of preachers are generally held in the "seat" of the district—Skippack. At the present time the preaching arrangement is as follows. One Sunday all four ministers are present at Skippack. The following Sunday two go to Worcester and two to Provi-

⁷ Bean, *op. cit.*, p. 1026.

dence. The third Sunday all four again meet at Skippack. The fourth Sunday the groups alternate (from the arrangement of two weeks previous) and two go to Providence and two to Worcester. Communion services are held at Skippack and Providence in the spring and at Worcester in the fall. But the deacon system is quite different. Each deacon is responsible (solely or jointly) for one congregation.

In 1844 a new meetinghouse was erected. It is a one-story stone building, fifty by sixty feet in size. The building committee consisted of Garret Hunsicker, Abraham Tyson, and Abraham Hallman. Three years later came the division led by John H. Oberholtzer of the Swamp congregation.^{7a} Those who remained in the Franconia Conference were denied the use of this new meetinghouse, although it has been claimed that numerically they were in the majority.⁷ Rather than resort to litigation the group which remained in the Franconia Conference built a new meetinghouse in 1848 about a mile and a quarter northwest of the old one. This building is thirty-six by forty-five feet in size. Although the meetinghouse was erected in 1848 the deed was not made until August 21, 1849. The land (one acre and sixty-three perches) was on that date granted by Isaac Kulp to three Mennonite trustees, Jacob F. Kulp, Daniel Landes, and George Reiff. The first burial also was made before the legal transfer occurred; a child (Nathaniel Reiff) was buried September 9, 1848. In 1853 Abraham Landes sold eighty perches of land to the congregation. The ancient meetinghouse (occupied by the seceding group) came to be called "Lower Skippack", while the building used by the congregation in the Franconia Conference is called "Upper Skippack." After a few years the Lower Skippack congregation withdrew from Oberholtzer's Conference and have remained independent until this day. They are usually called "Johnson Mennonites" from the fact that the third Henry Johnson is serving the congregation as minister. Their history will be completed in a later chapter (Part V, Chapter II).

Returning now to the Upper Skippack congregation which remained a part of the Franconia Conference, the following is the list of ordinations since the division of 1847. On August 17, 1848 George Detweiler (1799-1883) was ordained to the ministry. The congregation was without a resident bishop until 1852 when Abraham Wismer (1797-1877) was ordained. Deacon John B. Tyson (1810-1889) of the Skippack congregation was ordained in 1862. Preacher John B. Hunsberry (1821-1898) was ordained in 1863. In 1877 he was chosen bishop to succeed Wismer. Jacob B. Mensch (1835-1912) was chosen preacher in June, 1867. Mensch collected a great many old books. He was a man of a strong will. He kept rather full private conference minutes from 1880 until 1907, when Jacob C. Clemens began to take notes. No secretary was officially appointed until 1909. Deacon Abraham S. Kulp (1821-1904) of Skippack was ordained in 1874. Joseph Gander (1817-1901) of the Providence congregation was ordained deacon in 1876. Deacon Abraham S. Reiff (1817-1879) of the Worcester congregation was ordained in 1877, as an old man. Preacher Christian Hunsberger (1823-1906) was ordained in 1879. Deacon George

^{7a} See Part V, Chapter II, of this volume, for an account of Oberholtzer's schism.

L. Reiff (1846-1932) of the Worcester congregation was ordained June 24, 1880. Preacher Henry K. Wismer (1823-1910) was ordained June 5, 1883. Deacon Benjamin C. Wismer (1856-1934) of the Skippack congregation was ordained May 30, 1893. The first English preacher of the district is the present bishop, Warren G. Bean (1866-). He was ordained to the ministry June 15, 1897, and bishop November 16, 1909. Preacher Jesse H. Mack (1865-1934) was ordained at the Providence meetinghouse October 30, 1900. Deacon John G. Gotwals (1840-1929) of the Providence congregation was ordained on the same date as Jesse H. Mack, but he served only a little more than a decade. However, he returned to the congregation as a layman. Preacher Irwin R. Landes (1860-) was ordained November 9, 1909. Howard S. Pennapacker (1858-1931) was ordained to the ministry June 8, 1911. Deacon J. Martin Hunsberger (1863-1933) of the Providence congregation was ordained June 27, 1912. Deacon Jacob T. Landes (1875-) of the Skippack congregation was ordained June 15, 1926. He has the historic alms book in his care. Deacon Isaac B. Beide-man (1863-) of the Worcester congregation was ordained October 23, 1928. Preacher Jacob T. Landes (b. 1893; he has the same name and address as the deacon) was ordained June 9, 1931. Deacon Elmer M. Mack (1890-) of the Providence congregation was ordained November 14, 1933. The last man ordained in the district is his brother, Preacher Jesse M. Mack (1904-). This is a complete list of those known to have been preachers or deacons, and who signed the audits in the alms book. But there are at least two other men who ought to be mentioned. The first is Henry Pannebecker.

Henry Pannebecker signed the audits from 1775 to 1792. It is not known who he was. Hendrick Pannebecker, attorney and surveyor for Matthias Van Bebber had a son Henry (1717-1792).⁸ Possibly he was the Henry who signed in the alms book. Was he a preacher? From a study of the list of signers one receives the impression that in almost every case those who signed regularly for any length of time were ordained. But there is no known evidence that Hendrick's son Henry (1717-1792) was a preacher. To complicate matters further the 1796 letter from Franconia to Germantown states that Henrich Pannebecker would conduct the service at Germantown on January 1, 1797! Who was this Henry Pannebecker? Were there two preachers of this name? Or is the alms book signer not the Henry who died in 1792? But if he lived at least to 1797 why did he stop signing in 1792? That would seem to indicate that he was not the alms' audit signer.

The other man is Henry Bertolet (1796-1853). He was a Mennonite preacher who never signed the alms book audits. Evidently he was a progressive minister in his day for in 1836 he started to issue a Mennonite paper. But due to nonsupport and active opposition he was forced to drop the publication business after only one issue appeared. N. B. Grubb wrote: "Although called to the ministry, yet his very activity and too aggressive

⁸ *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., October, 1934, p. 73.

work . . . prevented his success as a Mennonite minister."⁹ Perhaps his relations with his ministerial brethren were somewhat strained from that time (or before) on. But his name is not found on the records of the General Conference Mennonites, so he evidently remained in the Franconia Conference, or else became independent. He is buried at Bertolet's burial acre in Upper Frederick township. Moses Gottshall (a General Conference Mennonite) preached the funeral sermon.

This list of ordained men still leaves unrecognized a number of men who several times signed the audits. I shall therefore here list all those who signed the audits, indicating the first and last years in which each signed, and in parentheses the number of times he signed. Perhaps this list will be of some value in further research. Very likely more of these men were ordained than is now known. If a man served as treasurer, he is considered a deacon and a "T" is placed after his name. If he is called a preacher in the 1773 letter an "L" is found after his name. If Daniel K. Cassel has listed him as ordained, a "C" follows his name. In case the evidence points to two men of the same name succeeding each other I have relied either on the change in handwriting or the death date (if known) of the first to make the separation. Those known to have been bishops are marked "Bish.", preachers, "Pre."; and deacons "Dea."

1.	Pre.	Martin Kolb	C	1738-1760	(18)
2.	Pre.	Claus Janson	C	1738-1743	(4)
3.	Pre.	Yilles Kassel	C	1738-1748	(11)
4.	Pre.	Jacob Greder		1738-1759	(10)
5.	Pre.	Michael Ziegler	T C	1738-1761 ¹⁰	(14)
6.	Dea.	Valentine Hunsicker	T	1739-1759	(11)
7.		Johannes Friedt		1739, 1764	(2)
8.	Pre.	Jacob Schumacker	L	1742-1779	(18)
9.		Peter Kuster ¹¹		1743-1768	(11)
10.	Bish.	Jacob Gaedtschalck	C	1745-1757	(12)
11.		Paulus Friedt		1746-1752	(4)
12.	Bish.	Andreas Ziegler	L C	1746-1790	(38)
13.		Garet Schrager		1750	(1)
14.		Adam Gotwals		1750	(1)
15.		Jacob Gaetschalcks		1755-1781	(8)
16.	Pre.	Henrich Kolb	L	1753-1781	(15)
17.		Christian Stauffer		1754	(1)
18.		Hans ¹² Dettweiller		1750, 1757	(2)
19.	Pre.	Dielman Kolb	L	1761-1779	(9)

⁹ 1908 *Mennonite Year Book and Directory*, p. 6. In his paper he calls himself a "minister in the Mennonite congregations at Skippack," (translated from the German).

¹⁰ Perhaps 1738-1764. His son was also Michael. A note in the book under date of August 27, 1761 speaks of the treasurer as "Michael Ziegler den Alten." Was Michael, Jr., also ordained? See no. 22.

¹¹ Sometimes Koster.

¹² The writing is almost illegible; it appears to be Hass, but his name was Hans.

20.	Henrich Kassel			¹³ 1761-1795	(6)
21. Dea.	Henrich Kassel	T		¹³ 1792-1834	(27)
22.	Michael Ziegler			¹⁴ 1764-1802	(8)
23.	Isaac Kolb			1764	(1)
24.	Peter Johnson			1764	(1)
25. Dea.	Isaac Hunsicker	T		1764-1814	(15)
26. Dea.	John Kassel	T		1767-1795	(10)
27.	John Custer ¹⁵			1776-1781	(3)
28.	Henry Pannebecker			1775-1792	(9)
29. Bish.	Henrich Hunsicker		C	1781-1832	(33)
30. Pre.	Isaac Kassel		C	1774-1823	(24)
31.	Benjamin Jansen ¹⁶			1791-1823	(11)
32.	Abraham Detweiler			1791, 1842	(2)
33.	Henrich Kolb			1791	(1)
34.	Martin Kolb			1791	(1)
35.	Gottschall Gottschalk ¹⁷			1791	(2)
36.	Henry Wismer			1791	(1)
37.	Peter Godschalk			1791	(1)
38.	William Tyson			1791	(1)
39.	Dielman Ziegler			1792	(1)
40.	John Tyson			1792, 1795	(2)
41.	Peter Johnson			1792	(1)
42.	John Horning			1792, 1795	(2)
43. Bish.	Johannes Hunsicker		C	1812-1847	(31)
44. Dea.	William Gottschall	T	C	1818-1847	(15)
45. Pre.	Matthias Rittenhouse		C	1820-1831	(9)
46. Dea.	David G. Allebach ^{17a}			1821-1846	(9)
47.	Garret Ziegler			1821	(1)
48. Dea.	Abraham Hendricks		T	1822-1834	(8)
49. Pre.	Henrich Bien ¹⁸			1824-1830	(6)
50. Dea.	Johannes Kratz	T	C	1825-1866	(31)
51.	John Histan			1825-1828	(4)
52.	Abraham Cassel			1830-1834	(5)
53. Pre.	Elias Landes		C	1832-1860	(28)
54.	Garet Hunsicker			1832-1845	(3)
55. Dea.	John Gotwals	T	C	1833-1874	(38)

¹³ There is no certainty here. An apparently new signature appears in 1792. The next audit is 1795; in that year both men signed, and the second name is followed by a J.—for Junior (?).

¹⁴ Perhaps 1775-1802. See No. 5.

¹⁵ Once Jan Koster.

¹⁶ Sometimes Johnson.

¹⁷ This name is found twice in 1791. Did the same man sign the same audit twice?

^{17a} This was the name of the first known deacon of the Towamencin congregation; born 1802; ordained about 1832; died 1888. All but one of the signatures is after 1832.

¹⁸ Once Bihn.

56.	Jacob Landes		1835, 1836	(2)
57.	Isaac Hunsicker		1835-1842	(4)
58.	George Reiff		1835-1842	(4)
59.	Dea. Johannes Landes	C	1837-1859	(10)
60.	Bish. Abraham Wismer	C	1839-1876	(38)
61.	Dea. Isaac Longacre	C	1841-1877	(32)
62.	Jacob Markley		1841	(1)
63.	John D. Hunsicker		1841	(1)
64.	Johannes Souder		1842	(1)
65.	Henry Kolb		1842	(1)
66.	Henry G. Johnson ¹⁹		1842	(1)
67.	Daniel Landes		1842, 1846	(2)
68.	John H. Hendricks		1846	(1)
69.	Pre. Abraham Hunsicker		1847	(1)
70.	John Custer		1848	(1)
71.	Paul Custer		1848	(1)
72.	Pre. George Detweiler	C	1850-1882	(30)
73.	Dea. John B. Tyson	T C	1862-1889	(26)
74.	Bish. John B. Hunsberry	C	1863-1897	(34)
75.	Pre. Jacob B. Mensch	C	1868-1911	(44)
76.	Dea. Abraham S. Kulp	C	1874-1903	(29)
77.	Dea. Joseph Gander	C	1876-1900	(23)
78.	Dea. Abraham S. Reiff	C	1877-1879	(3)
79.	Pre. Christian Hunsberger	C	1880-1901	(21)
80.	Dea. Geo. L. Reiff	C	1881-1932	(34)
81.	Pre. Henry K. Wismer	C	1884-1910	(27)
82.	Dea. Benjamin C. Wismer	T	1894-1933	(40)
83.	Bish. Warren G. Bean		1898-	
84.	Pre. Jesse H. Mack		1901-1934	(33)
85.	Dea. John G. Gotwals		1901-1911	(11)
86.	Pre. Irwin R. Landes		1910-	
87.	Pre. Howard S. Pennapacker		1912-1930	(19)
88.	Dea. J. Martin Hunsberger		1913-1933	(21)
89.	Dea. Jacob T. Landes	T	1927-	
90.	Dea. Isaac B. Beideman		1929-	
91.	Pre. Jacob T. Landes		1933-	
92.	Dea. Elmer M. Mack		1934-	
93.	Pre. Jesse M. Mack		1935-	

Following is a list of the treasurers and joint-treasurers. It has been assumed that they are all deacons, except Michael Ziegler. Ziegler subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith in 1725 as a "Servant of the Word of God, and Elder." Evidently he was a preacher. Might he have been a bishop-deacon?

¹⁹ He was ordained preacher by those who seceded on December 2, 1847, and bishop, December 1, 1852. He was therefore only a layman in 1842.

1. Jacob Kolb	-1738	
2. Michael Ziegler	1739-1741 ;	1753-1760
3. Valentine Hunsicker	1742-1752 ;	1761-1770
4. John Kassel	1771-1784	
5. Isaac Hunsicker	1785-1821	
6. Henrich Kassel	1821-1829	

JOINT TREASURERS

6a. Abraham Hendricks (intermittently)	1822-1832
6b. William Gottschall	1824-1827
7. Johannes Kratz	1830-1835

JOINT TREASURER

7a. Johannes Gotwals	1834, 1835
8. Johannes Gotwals	1836-1867
9. Johannes Tyson	1868-1889
10. Abraham S. Kulp	1890-1902
11. Benjamin C. Wismer	1903-1933
12. Jacob T. Landes	1934-

* * * *

The Skippack congregation was very slow to adopt progressive methods of Christian work. This was due to a few very conservative ministers the latter part of the last century. Probably from rather ignoble causes the ordination of a bishop in the district (following the death of John B. Hunsberry) was held off for a decade. Similarly one of the Skippack ministers managed to hold off the ordination of an English preacher for a year. This is unpleasant history. But it may teach some lessons. The district suffered. Without a bishop, with no Sunday school, and with no regular English preaching, the young people scattered to other denominations.

But with the organization of the Skippack Mennonite Sunday School in the spring of 1897, and the ordination of Warren G. Bean some months later, a brighter future appeared. Yet it appears that the district never fully recovered. The Worcester congregation is almost gone. The Upper Skippack congregation now numbers only 120.

It is in order to digress at this point to name the man who served as superintendent of the Upper Skippack Mennonite Sunday School for many years. He is Abram B. Mensch, son of Preacher Jacob B. Mensch. Other superintendents there have been William J. Bean, John T. Landes, Isaac S. Kulp, Jacob T. Landes, Abram Landes, Norman Reinford, and Eugene Keer.

When the Eastern State Penitentiary was built in the Skippack community several years ago the State bought a number of farms from Mennonite farmers of the community. Many former Skippack brethren then moved into towns such as Souderton. This was another blow to the district.

Bishop Bean and his fellow ministers have been in favor of special meetings. Sunday school was first held for six months each year, later nine

and finally twelve. A young people's meeting was started some years ago, but has again been allowed to discontinue. Both evangelistic and Sunday-school meetings are held regularly. The Pottstown Mission has been added to the district.

One more thing should be mentioned before closing this chapter; it appears that it was the example and teaching of this district which has introduced a literal observance of foot-washing into the other churches of the Franconia Mennonite Conference.²⁰ As late as October 4, 1917 Conference admonished the ministers "to teach the subject of foot-washing more earnestly, so that it may be more generally observed."

²⁰ Testimony of the oldest member of the Franconia Mennonite Conference, Preacher Henry M. Clemmer of Salford, deceased November 23, 1936.

Chapter III

WORCESTER OR METHACTON

Worcester Township, Montgomery County

Worcester is the smallest congregation in the district having an ordained official; it is very old. Historians have always held that the cemetery was started as a private burial ground.¹ The oldest stone with a legible marker bears the date 1744. On October 6, 1739 Henry Rittenhouse² and his wife Susanna, granted thirty-two perches of land to seven trustees and their successors. Four of these were Mennonites, namely, Christopher Zimmerman, Cunrad Stem, Peter Keyser, and Peter Custard. The other three (non-Mennonites) were Jacob Stire, Frederick Baker, and Frederick Marsteller.³ On the same date, Jacob Stire and his mother, Catharine Stire, granted thirty-two perches of land adjoining the Rittenhouse plot to Henry Rittenhouse, Christopher Zimmerman, Cunrad Stem, Peter Keyser, Peter Custard, Frederick Baker, and Frederick Marsteller. These two lots were granted to the "said Trustees in special Confidence for the use and Behoof of the Dutch Anabaptist Society in the Township of Worcester for the price of 5 shillings"

There is a tradition in the Styer family that one, Stephen Steyer who bought the two hundred-acre tract which included the present meetinghouse property had set aside a lot for a burying ground. He died intestate May 5, 1736. It was his son and his widow who granted one half of the sixty-four perches in 1739.

The date of the erection of the first school and meetinghouse is not known, but it was between 1739 and 1771.⁴ On April 8, 1771 the three surviving trustees, Henry Rittenhouse, Jacob Stire, and Cunrad Stem granted the sixty-four perches to six new trustees ". . . the whole sixty-four perches . . . together with a meetinghouse thereon erected unto the said Peter Keyser, George Baker, Jacob Kester, Henry Marsteller, Cunrad Stem, Jr. and Henry Rittenhouse." These six trustees on the same date executed a deed of trust to William Rittenhouse, Arnold Zimmerman, Paul Kester, and Christian Stowver stating ". . . that the said conveyance or assurance of the aforesaid Lots or Pieces of Land so made to them aforesaid were upon special Trust and Confidence for the particular Uses and

¹ A fine sketch of the meetinghouse and burial ground written by Joseph R. Heebner, appeared in *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., August 1, 1922, pp. 84-89. Much of the data of this chapter is based on Mr. Heebner's article.

² Grandson of Preacher William and son of Preacher Nicholas.

³ The 1771 Deed of Trust states, ". . . and moreover three of the former trustees were not of the Anabaptist Persuasion (viz., Jacob Stire, Frederick Baker and Frederick Marsteller)"—quoted by Mr. Heebner, *op. cit.*

⁴ A possible identification of the Mennonite meetinghouse mentioned by Rev. Muhlberg in 1742 (see Part II, Chapter IV) should be mentioned. Possibly Rev. Muhlberg referred to the Worcester meetinghouse.

Purposes following,—that is to say: The said meetinghouse and Lots of ground to be for the use of the Dutch Anabaptist Society for a Place of Worship, and Burying ground for their dead. And also for a School house to teach the Children of the said Anabaptist[s] and others—without Exception, living in the Neighborhood at a convenient and reasonable distance from the same, etc. And, moreover, three of the former Trustees were not of the Anabaptist Persuasion (viz. Jacob Stire, Frederick Baker, and Frederick Marsteller). Yet, nevertheless, it is agreed that their Posterity may from Time to Time bring any Godly Protestant minister into the said Meeting house to preach at Burials, or other Times so as not to interfere with the Meeting of the Anabaptists.”

School was continued in the meetinghouse until the Quarry Hole school-house was built near Fairview village in 1860. It is claimed that the instruction was in English for the first six months; then in German for two years; then English for two years; and so on, alternating according to the wishes of the trustees. The known names of teachers are Joseph Ebert, Thomas Bates, William Gosho, Edwin Gresh, Frank Hoffman, David Custer, and David W. Longacre (who was still living in 1922 when Heebner wrote his article).

It is not known when the first church official was ordained. As was indicated in the history of the Skippack congregation, the circuit system obtained in this bishop district, and is still used. The son of Henry Rittenhouse (original grantor), Matthias (1770-1832), was one of the ministers of the circuit and is buried in the Methacton Cemetery. Deacons known to have been ordained for this congregation are Isaac Longacre (1803-1879), Abraham S. Reiff (1817-1879), George L. Reiff (1846-1932), and Isaac B. Beideman (1863-).

Additional land was bought in 1801 and 1860. On December 21, 1801 John Fontilott and his wife, Elizabeth, sold forty-three and one-half perches of land to the six trustees, Christopher Zimmerman, Derrick Keyser, John Cassel, Derrick Casselberry, Henry Freed, and John Heebner, for the “Dutch Anabaptist Society for a burying ground to bury their dead.” Again, on March 27, 1860 Jesse J. Kirk and his wife Margaret C. sold seventy-seven and one-half perches of land for \$180.00 to “Joseph Metz, Jacob Beyer, Joseph Heebner, Abraham Reiff, Samuel Rittenhouse, and Abraham Detweiler, Trustees of the Mennoist Society burying ground of Worcester.”

Of the first meetinghouse erected between 1739 and 1771, Mr. Heebner writes: “The first meeting house at this place was a substantial stone pointed structure. The only thing to designate the spot where it stood is the remaining wall of one side of the building upon which a row of sheds rest. It was a good type of colonial structure for a rural community, being about 24 feet by 22 feet in size and containing one door and seven windows. The interior walls were plastered, the ceiling prominently displaying the huge joists. The building was used for worship until 1805 or 1806.”

On December 20, 1804 John Custer and John Metz (sons of Paul Custer and Leonard Metz) gave a deed of trust for 82.7 perches of land to Mathias Rittenhouse, Jacob Cassel and John Been, “Trustees, nominated,

chosen, and appointed by the Menonist Congregation of Worcester, to erect and build a meetinghouse thereon." This lot had originally been sold for five shillings by William Rittenhouse and his wife, Margaret, on April 16, 1785. The meetinghouse erected about 1805 was also of one story, built of pointed stone, with a board partition dividing the main auditorium from the vestibule. The benches were a bit higher along the sides of the room. At first the building had an open fireplace, later a wood stove. A cluster of shade trees now stands where this building stood.

The third and present meetinghouse was erected in 1873. "Jacob W. Keyser, Abraham S. Reiff, Jacob B. Beyer, Trustees of the Mennonite Society of Worcester" purchased 15.2 perches of land from John Jacob and his wife, Anne, on August 9, 1873. While the meetinghouse was being erected, the congregation accepted the invitation extended to them by the Schwenkfelders to worship in their meetinghouse at Worcester. The present building is a one-story stone structure, plastered. The building committee consisted of Abraham Reiff, J. B. Beyer, and J. Boorse, according to an inscription on a beam in the attic.

The congregation was never very large. In 1803 thirty-three people helped to pay Jacob Cassel for putting a shingle roof on the meetinghouse, which task Cassel undertook, according to a manuscript in the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. Another manuscript at the same library indicates that in 1833 forty-eight individuals subscribed money for the improvement of the wall and burial acre. In 1890 there were about fifty members. But the congregation has sadly dwindled since that time. Today, there are not more than ten members. Even the sexton is no Mennonite. The cause is probably to be found in the extreme reluctance with which progressive methods of work were adopted. Sunday school was finally organized on April 4, 1898, one year later than Skippack. On April 24, 1898, an attendance of 125 was recorded. Joseph H. Hunsberger was superintendent for the first fifteen years, Isaac B. Beideman for one year, and Emanuel C. Hertzler from 1914 to 1920, when the Sunday school was discontinued.

Another unfortunate experience for the congregation was caused by members placing an organ in the meetinghouse for the use of the Sunday school about 1899. As Mennonites have always worshiped without instrumental accompaniment, the fall Conference of that year immediately protested. Evidently, one of the preachers encouraged the Sunday school to continue using the organ. The next spring, the congregation asked Conference for permission to use the organ only in the Sunday-school exercises, but were, of course, denied it. In fact, one of the ministers was required to make a confession to Conference, and the organ was removed. In all probability, this attempt to place an organ in the Worcester meetinghouse and the resultant controversy was a blow to the prosperity of the congregation.

While the congregation has not been very large, the cemetery is quite large and was evidently used by the community. The institution of non-Mennonite trustees may be indicative of that fact. For by 1922 (Mr. Heebner states) that there were about seven hundred burials in the cemetery. Of

course, during the eighteenth century, the most common markers were field stones. Many of these have been weather-beaten until they are no longer legible. Some of the first Schwenkfelders who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1734 and 1736 are buried there. And in 1784, the famous preacher-printer of the Church of the Brethren, Christopher Sower, Junior, was interred there. A copy of his 1763 Bible which belonged to the congregation has been deposited for safe keeping in the Library of the Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Among the names found on the tombstones are the following: "Bean, Beyer, Brant, Baughman, Blattner, Brey, Beideman, Cassel, Custer, Clemens, Cloward, Detwiler, Dettree, Davis, Drake, Freed, Funk, Fenstermacher, Gotwals, Gallegher, Heebner, Halteman, Hunsberger, Hoffman, Johnson, Jones, Keyser, Kulp, Landes, Longacre, Moyer, Metz, Rittenhouse, Rosen, Rosenberry, Sower, Smith, Shutt, Stauffer, Styer, Tyson, Wagner, Weirman, Wismer, Wanner, and Zimmerman."

The trustees of the congregation called a meeting on November 26, 1921, at which time they met those interested in the cemetery and discussed the removal of footstones and the grading of the cemetery. The sense of the meeting was entirely favorable to the proposed work and the cemetery is now in fine condition.

Near one corner of the cemetery and close to the spot where the celebrated Christopher Sower, Junior, is buried stands an enormous oak tree which is apparently several centuries old. Two feet above the ground it is fourteen feet in circumference.

The meetinghouse is now usually called Worcester, the name of the township in which it stands. In 1773, the meetinghouse was called "Madetschen." In the Pennsylvania German dialect it is still called "Madetschy." In English, it is often referred to as "Methacton." It is usually considered to be an Indian name. The village of Fairview was once called Mathacton. Mr. Heebner states that he one time noticed a document on which the township was referred to as Matacton. Another theory for the origin of the name is that it was caused by the early settlers of the township erecting many temporary buildings with thatched roofs. The Indian name theory appears to be more plausible.

It seems pathetic that at the same time that energetic Mennonite young men of the Franconia Conference are establishing thriving mission Sunday schools, so historic a congregation as Worcester should be allowed to die out. But this has been the fate of a number of congregations of the Franconia Conference.

Chapter IV

PROVIDENCE

Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County

When the celebrated Lutheran preacher, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, arrived at Trappe in 1742 he stated¹ that there were "two houses of worship in Providence²,—the Episcopal at Evansburg and one built by the Mennonists." Why then was the Providence congregation not mentioned in the catalog appended to the 1773 letter? Did the congregation in existence in 1742 remain very small? or did it die out altogether? or was Providence simply completely forgotten^{2a} by those making up the list of congregations in 1773? There are no known records of the Providence congregation prior to the granting of the land for the present meetinghouse. Perhaps the first building was built on land owned by a Mennonite, without making a deed.

On October 15, 1815 Abraham Rosenberg^{2b} and his wife Margaret of Upper Providence township, Montgomery county granted one acre of land to five Mennonite trustees for a consideration of five shillings. The trustees were Abraham Reiff, Abraham Johnson, Joseph Alderfer, Anthony Vanderslice, and Jacob Hunsicker. The land was granted "to and for the use, Benefit and behoof of the said Society of Menonists forever for them to build thereon for a house of Worship for the use and service of the said society and also for a place to bury their deat [sic] and also [for] the inhabitants of the said Township to build a School house for the instruction of their children and those of their respective families. Provided also that neither of them the said Abraham Reiff, Abraham Johnson, Joseph Alderfer, Anthony Vanderslice and Jacob Hunsicker, or any other person or persons succeeding them in this trust who shall be of the said society to be out of Unity with them shall be capable of executing this trust while they or either of them shall so remain"³

¹ Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 1061.

² Providence Township was not divided into Upper and Lower Providence townships until 1805.

^{2a} Towamencin and Lexington were also overlooked in the 1773 letter; perhaps "Schwamin" is intended to be either one of those two. So the possibility of an oversight remains.

Another possibility must be mentioned. Possibly Rev. Muhlenberg was mistaken as to the location of the Worcester Mennonite meetinghouse and had Worcester in mind when he spoke of the "houses of worship in Providence." If this be the case the year 1815 marks the beginning of the Providence Mennonite congregation. Its non-mention in 1773 is then no problem at all; there was no Providence congregation in 1773.

^{2b} He signed, Rosenberger.

³ Strangely enough this deed was taken by those who seceded from the Franconia Mennonites in 1847 and is now in the possession of the "Johnson" Mennonites. This extract is taken from *Deed Book 40*, p. 511, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

The deed made provision both for a meetinghouse and for a school. One building served both purposes. An old lady (recently deceased) stated that she had attended school in the Providence meetinghouse.

According to Bean's *History of Montgomery County* . . . the present building was erected "about 1820." The basis of this statement is not known. The German Bible in the meetinghouse, which was printed at Halle, Germany, in 1797, has an inscription which is difficult to read. In substance (translated) it states: "This Bible belongs . . . meetinghouse in Upper Prov . . . Township Montgomery County Pennsylv . . . Purchased in the year of Christ 1817 (?) Cost \$3.75."

There has been entirely too much speculation in place of research already, so one hesitates to write any conjectures. But in the absence of any records it seems plausible to believe that the deed was granted on the occasion of the erection of a new meetinghouse. The old meetinghouse may, or may not, have stood on the present tract. Rosenberger is a Mennonite name. So the author would be inclined, in the absence of any other information, to believe that the meetinghouse was built about 1815, rather than 1820 as Bean states. Sometime since an anteroom has been added to the original building but no one seems to know when.

The congregation is in the Skippack circuit—Skippack, Worcester, and Providence. Deacons, known to have been specifically ordained to serve the Providence congregation, are John Gotwals (c. 1788-1877), Joseph Gander (1817-1901), John G. Gotwals (1840-1929), J. Martin Hunsberger (1863-1933), and Elmer M. Mack (1890-).

In 1890 there were about sixty-five members in the congregation. Today there are forty. The causes for the decline are probably similar to those which caused the decline of Worcester, the chief one being reluctance to conduct the services in English. However (more or less of a Union) Sunday school was started in the Providence meetinghouse about 1887.

The congregation now has evangelistic and Sunday-school meetings regularly. During the winter of 1926-27 Preacher Henry Bechtel of the Vincent congregation conducted a Bible study class in the meetinghouse. Some of the sisters of the congregation attend the Sewing Circle of the Pottstown Mennonite Mission.

The following men have served as superintendents of the Providence Mennonite Sunday School: James Detwiler, J. Martin Hunsberger, Elmer M. Mack, and True Sheetz.

The church trustees at the present time are Abram H. Jones, Abram C. Jones, and Elmer Mack. A large and well-kept cemetery adjoins the meetinghouse. The oldest stones are dated 1819. Some typical names on the gravestones are Alderfer, Ashenfelder, Bean, Bechtel, Buckwalter, Detweiler, Godshall, Hallman, Hunsicker, Johnson, Kindig, Kepner, Kratz, Reiner, Rittenhouse, Rosenberger, Tyson, Wair, and Wismer. A fund of over \$3,000 has been raised for the perpetual maintenance of the cemetery.

The Providence meetinghouse is a plain stone structure, about twenty-eight feet by forty-six feet. It is now the oldest meetinghouse in the Franconia Mennonite Conference.

Chapter V

VINCENT

East Vincent Township, Chester County¹

When the three Mennonite bishops catalogued the congregations and preachers of the district in 1773 they called the Chester county churches the "Schulkiel" (district) stating that meetings were held in three places. The present Vincent congregation was assuredly one of them. The other two were probably Phoenixville and Coventry, or Hereford and Coventry.

The present building has in it a stone with the date 1735 inscribed upon it. This has been regarded as the date of the founding of the congregation. It seems to be based on the date of an old grave marker.^{1a} On a large stone in the wall along the west side of the cemetery are inscribed the date 1759 and the following names, J. Acker, D. Langenecker, A. Acker, E. Schvnck, T. Buchwalder, P. Roth, P. Defrehn, and I. Basler. (David Langenecker was a minister, as is indicated in the 1773 letter). The oldest known tombstone now legible in the cemetery has the inscription, H. S. 1760. Other old stones are P. Rhodes, 1771; — Wagner, July 17, 1772; Elizabeth Hause, March 30, 1771; I. Benner, December 6, 1790.

The land on which the meetinghouse stood was not purchased until 1798. On June 12, 1798 John and Catherine Rhoades conveyed two acres of land for five shillings to Henry Acker, Sr., and Jacob Finkbiner. The next day Henry Acker, Sr., and Jacob Finkbiner executed a deed of trust to Cornelius Pannebecker, Henry Acker, Jr., Isaac Turner, and George Deimer. From this document it is evident that the meetinghouse had been erected prior to 1798 " . . . by the religious society called Menonists with the help and assistance of their neighbors of divers other religious denominations . . ." and that this meetinghouse was to be used " . . . for the performance of Divine worship and [they] shall also permit and suffer the said meetinghouse to be used as a school house to educate the youth of the said religious society in useful learning as also of all other denominations who have assisted in the building thereof." George A. Weber of Kitchener, Ontario, has a book in his possession which his great-grandfather, David Histan, used in this school in 1811. This meetinghouse was long known as Rhoades' meetinghouse.

In 1858 this building (built of stone) was remodeled. It served as a house of worship until 1889. In that year it was razed to the ground and a new meetinghouse, also of stone, was erected a few rods east of the former

¹ For much of the data of this chapter the author is indebted to the historian of the congregation, John W. Kolb.

^{1a} D. K. Cassel: *Geschichte Der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, p. 132. But even if someone were buried in that burying ground in 1735 that is no indication whatever as to the date of the erection of the first meetinghouse. The date, 1735, cannot be accepted as the established date for the founding of Vincent.

building. This 1889 meetinghouse, which is still in use, is thirty-four by fifty-five feet in size.

The 1773 letter states that although meetings were held in three places, "there is only one community." But it appears that after some time Phoenixville did become somewhat detached from Vincent and Coventry. And when Charlestown was established it was usually served by the Phoenixville preachers. So this chapter will list only those who have served as bishops, preachers, and deacons in the Vincent and Coventry congregations. It must be explained that this selection of ministers is after all rather arbitrary. For it appears that ministers were not so specifically assigned to one congregation before the Revolutionary War. Congregations were slow in getting well organized. For example (Preacher) Hans Jacob Bechtel in 1720 bought a farm of 366 acres in New Hanover township (North of Pottstown). He signed (Jacob Beghtly) the 1727 Confession of Faith as from the "Manatant." Local (Mennonite) historians have usually considered the modern Hereford congregation as representing the tract originally called Manatant. Yet it appears that the Manatant also included at least the Coventry congregation. In 1739 Hans Jacob Bechtel died; the same year his son Martin was ordained to the ministry. In 1786 Martin died. He was evidently first buried in the Sprogel burying ground (Pottstown) and over a century later reinterred in the Coventry cemetery. The 1773 letter assigns him to the "Schulkiel,"—Chester County.

Perhaps the congregational organizations of Vincent and Coventry were one time more distinct than the old people now know. But today it is generally believed that the two congregations were served by the same ministers. And inasmuch as Coventry has been abandoned by the Mennonites all the known ministers and deacons of the two congregations will be here listed.

The first known minister in the region was Hans Jacob Bechtel (died 1739). His son Martin (1710-1786) was ordained preacher in 1739 and bishop in 1758. A coworker of Hans Jacob Bechtel was Daniel Langenecker, who also signed the 1727 Confession of Faith. Preacher Henry S. Bower calls Langenecker a bishop, but gives no proof for his assertion.² Langenecker came to America between 1719 and 1722. The 1773 letter mentions three preachers of whom few dates are known, David Langeneker, Joseph Showalter (died by 1802), and Johannes Langeneker, the last of whom was ordained in 1772. Preacher John High (Johannes Hoch) who lived from 1742-1815, and was ordained before 1796, is buried at Coventry. Historian A. J. Fretz mentions a Preacher John Stauffer (1762-1822), a weaver and farmer in East Coventry township, Chester county.³ Preacher Stauffer is also buried at Coventry. Christian Beary (1769-1832) served as a preacher and is buried at Coventry. Preacher Jacob Funk (1761-1817) is buried at Vincent. Abraham Haldeman (1780-1865) was ordained to the

² Rev. Henry S. Bower: *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Daniel Stauffer and Hans Bauer*, . . . , Harleysville, Pa., 1897, p. 27.

³ A. J. Fretz: *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Henry Stauffer* . . . , Harleysville, Pa., 1899, p. 233.

ministry in 1830; later he was ordained bishop. In 1842 he moved to Juniata county, Pennsylvania. Preacher Jacob B. Latshaw (1796-1867) was ordained about 1832; he is buried at Vincent. Bishop John B. Latshaw (1804-1878) was ordained preacher about 1834; and bishop by about 1852. He is buried at Coventry. Preacher David Buckwalter (1809-1891) was ordained about 1854. He was the first English preacher and is buried at Vincent. Preacher Jacob H. Funk (1825-1894) was ordained about 1863. He is also buried at Vincent. Preacher Jacob B. Hunsberger (1836-1919) has been called the last preacher at Coventry. He was ordained November 24, 1877, and is buried at Coventry. John H. Latshaw (1827-1910) was ordained deacon December 26, 1864; and preacher, June 9, 1887. He is buried at Vincent. John Heistand (1785-1880) served as deacon for a number of years, and is buried at Vincent. Jonathan Kolb (1825-1897) was ordained deacon November 16, 1875. He served as school teacher in the meeting-house school for a time. He is buried at Vincent. Deacon William Good (1849-1905) was ordained in the fall of 1888; he is buried at Vincent. Preacher J. Clayton Kolb (1874-) was ordained June 4, 1900. Conference removed him from office for opposing Sunday-school work. Deacon Israel Good (1847-1912) was ordained October 30, 1905; he is buried at Vincent. Preacher Amos Kolb (1879-) was ordained June 7, 1906. Deacon Charles Kolb (1884-) was ordained May 26, 1910. Preacher Henry G. Bechtel (1878-) was ordained November 3, 1914. Preacher Gabriel H. Brunk moved from Ohio to Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, in 1920. He preached at Vincent while in Pennsylvania but was not received into the Franconia Conference. In 1923 he returned to Ohio. Evidently the names of a number of early deacons are lost to history.

In 1798 the trustees at Vincent were Cornelius Pannebecker, Henry Acker, Jr., Isaac Turner, and George Deimer.⁴ On December 28, 1822 Abraham Haldeman, Jacob Newkommer, John Guildin, and F. W. Geissenhamer were elected. On October 10, 1832 the following trustees were elected: Abraham Haldeman, F. C. Guildin, Christopher Buckwalter, and John Kolb. John Kolb, Christopher Buckwalter, F. W. Heckel, and Benjamin Haldeman were elected on April 23, 1836. Joseph Hunsberger, Daniel Latshaw, Jacob Funk, and Abraham Rosenberger were elected on March 7, 1840. On March 14, 1857 Christian Haldeman, John Latshaw, Jacob H. Funk, and Jonathan Kolb were elected. Jonathan Kolb, Christian Haldeman, Jacob Latshaw, and David Heistand were elected on April 16, 1865. Joel Good, Christian Wismer, and William Buckwalter were elected on March 27, 1869. Joel Good, William Buckwalter, and Benjamin B. Halteman were elected on March 25, 1871. John Funk, William Buckwalter, and Joel Good were elected in March, 1878. Henry Funk, Elias Latshaw, and Rudolph Stauffer were elected in 1880. On May 17, 1902 Solomon Good, Aaron Funk, and Nathaniel Buckwalter were elected. John W. Kolb was elected on March 27, 1929.

⁴ John W. Kolb says they were elected on June 13, 1798. On that date a deed of trust was executed to these four men.

The first (known) sexton was Samuel Detterline. He was appointed in 1857 at a salary of six dollars per year. Later sextons were Samuel Landis, Charles Shulby, Amos Shaner, and John Shaner.

The names of the more recent choristers are Jacob Funk, Jacob Hunsberger, William Good, and Solomon Good.

There was a time several generations ago when the congregation had dwindled to a few families. Coventry used to be the larger congregation. But the Vincent members were considerably ahead of most of the congregations in the district in adopting new methods of work. Sunday school was organized in 1870 with John Latshaw as superintendent and Jonathan Kolb as assistant. After a few years it was discontinued, but was again started in 1890 with John F. Kolb as superintendent. Others who have served in that office are Jacob F. Kolb, Solomon Good, Henry Bechtel, and John W. Kolb.

The change from German to English in the services was accomplished far in advance of the rest of the conference. The first English preacher was ordained in 1854 although both German and English were used until 1878. Since 1878 the services have been practically all conducted in the English language. In fact the congregation used to send to other parts of the conference, even to the Lancaster Conference, to call a bishop who could, and would, conduct English communion services. The last German hymnbook used was the old *Zions Harfe*. The change from German to English singing took place gradually between 1850 and 1875. Some congregations in the Franconia Conference still sing one or more German hymns in each church service. The first English hymnal used had no notes, *Mennonite Hymns*. In June, 1890 *Hymns and Tunes* were purchased for the congregation and used until 1906. In that year the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* was introduced, and was used until 1929 when the *Church Hymnal* displaced the older books. In the Sunday school *Gospel Hymns*, Numbers 5 and 6, and *Life Songs* have supplemented the church hymnbooks.

The congregation used to alternate with the Coventry congregation in having communion,—one place in the spring, and the other place in the fall. Since Coventry services were discontinued in 1914 communion is held twice each year at Vincent. This is the only meetinghouse in the Franconia Conference where communion is given twice a year. Also church services have been held every Sunday since 1914. The usual custom in the district is to have church services every two weeks in the morning.

The first Bible conference was held in August, 1910. The only one held in the conference prior to that date was at Doylestown in 1909, and the Doylestown ministers were required to apologize to conference for "working ahead" of conference, that is, arranging for the meeting without the permission of conference. Since 1911 Bible conferences are held biennially at Vincent. On December 6, 1919 a mission meeting was held. Evangelistic services were held very few years since 1914. Some of the evangelists were, George R. Brunk, David H. Mosemann, Noah H. Mack, John H. Mosemann, Jacob C. Clemens (in 1925—the first evangelist of this group who was a Franconia Conference member), Jacob M. Moyer, and John S. Hess.

All these progressive steps have saved the congregation from extinction. In 1890 there were sixty members; today there are one hundred fifteen.

The congregation has also given the church several active workers, John L. Stauffer, Arthur T. Moyer, Tobias E. Moyer, and Rudy L. Stauffer. Brief biographies of these men may be of interest.

John L. Stauffer was born November 13, 1888 near Yerkes, Montgomery county, Pennsylvania. About 1894 he moved with his parents to Chester county, locating near Spring City. In June, 1906 John was baptized and received into the Vincent congregation. On August 3, 1910 he married Lydia B. Kolb of the same congregation. He accepted a call to work at the Mennonite Gospel Mission, Altoona, Pennsylvania, moving there February 11, 1911. The mission was then under the joint control of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference and the Eastern Amish Mennonite Conference. On June 29, 1911 he was ordained to the ministry under the direction of these two conferences, but became a member of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference. During the summer of 1918 he received a call from Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Virginia. His conference released him, and he accepted the call, moving to Virginia on October 21. Since that time he has served on the faculty of the school. On November 10, 1934 at the Zion church near Broadway, he was ordained bishop to assist Bishop Lewis Shank. On October 7, 1935 he was appointed Acting President of the school. Since that time he has accepted the presidency, succeeding A. D. Wenger. He is the father of five children, Lois J., Paul, J. Mark, Ruth, and James.

Arthur T. Moyer accepted a call to become superintendent of the Welsh Mountain Mission in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, on April 1, 1913. There he also taught the public school, and was active in helping the colored people of the mountain in many ways. However his work was carried on for only about a decade. On January 24, 1924 a laborer was stealing corn from a barn near the schoolhouse. Brother Moyer spoke to the thief, who realizing that he was recognized, shot and mortally wounded the missionary. Moyer died a week later without naming the murderer. Nevertheless he was found and sentenced to a long term in prison.

Tobias E. Moyer and his wife, Amanda Gable Moyer, accepted the stewardship of the Mennonite Old People's Home of the Lancaster Conference on March 14, 1911. He served there for a score of years. Sister Moyer died on June 10, 1928 and was buried at the Coventry cemetery. They were the parents of Arthur T. Moyer, above.

Rudy L. Stauffer is a younger brother of John L. Stauffer. He was born October 4, 1893. In March, 1923, he moved to Ohio. On June 23 of that year he married Sylvia Steiner of Marshallville, Ohio. Four years later, on August 14, he was ordained by lot as preacher for the Salem Mennonite Church, Weilersville, Ohio, where he now serves.

Chapter VI

HEREFORD¹

Bally, Washington Township, Berks County

The limestone soil of Butter valley in Hereford township, Berks county, early attracted Mennonite settlers. Daniel Stauffer bought land in Colebrookdale township in 1720; his brother Jacob bought land in the same township in 1724. On March 11, 1729 Ulrich Beidler bought 121 acres of land from Casper Wistar. By 1730 Stauffer, Bechtel, Moll, Beidler, and Latshaw settlers had located in the community where the Hereford Mennonites now live.

According to a generally accepted tradition the first Hereford meetinghouse was erected in 1732 on land owned by a Mennonite named Ulrich Beidler. No deed was given for this meetinghouse and burial lot. This was unfortunate, for Beidler fell under the censure of the church. To retaliate he sold his land, including the meetinghouse lot, to Henry Neale, a Catholic gentleman of Philadelphia, on March 1, 1747. But eight years later, on April 11, 1755, "George Bechtel, weaver of Hertford township, Berks county," paid two pounds and ten shillings to Robert Harding, a Catholic priest of Philadelphia, for one acre and nine perches (the meetinghouse lot) of the Beidler tract.² Bechtel was a Hereford Mennonite preacher. The witnesses were William Ward and Theodore Schneider. The latter was a Jesuit priest and Bavarian missionary (of the Roman Catholic Church). But even more important for historical research than the conveyance itself is the inscription on the reverse side of the deed, written in German script. This inscription is a release signed by "Joerg bächtel" stating that the land conveyed by this indenture was given to him only in the name of the whole congregation and that the land was paid for by the congregation; therefore, he (Bechtel) conveys the land to the congregation (Gemeinde) for a meetinghouse and burial ground "for always and all time," and disentitles both himself and his heirs from having any more rights there than any other member of the congregation.³ Witnesses were Jacob Detweiler, who made his mark, "Peter moll" and "Casper baumann." Moll was also a Hereford Mennonite preacher.

After the Mennonites were once legal owners of their meetinghouse, burial ground and usual grove of trees they razed the first meetinghouse

¹ Based chiefly on a comprehensive sketch by Amy Hiestand Gehman and Mary Latshaw Bower.

² Deed recorded at Reading, Pa., A-46-265.

³ "Weil Ich besagter Joerg baechtel dass Jenige land dass in diesem indenter begriffen ist Hab allein in dem Nahmen der Gantzen Gemeinde Gekauft auch auss dem gemeinen geld bezahlt also ueber gebe ich es an die Gemeind also dass es Vor immer und alle Zeit Soll sein Vor ein Versamlungs Hauss und begraebniss platz ohne dass ich Joerg baechtel oder die meinigen etwass mehr davon zu bretendiren Habe als ein anderer."

and erected a larger one. This second Hereford meetinghouse of 1755 was a log structure, low, weatherboarded with planks, and whitewashed. Along the gable ends were pent eaves, corresponding with those along the sides (see photograph). In 1790 an addition was built to its northern end. School was for many years conducted in this addition. Between the schoolroom and the church auditorium were folding doors. It is claimed that at first the seats were but backless benches and a table served for a pulpit. Later better benches were installed and the pulpit was elevated a step above the floor of the auditorium. Two stoves, ten-plate wood stoves, heated the two rooms. The building had two doors. The last service was held in this historic meetinghouse on September 13, 1899, after which it was razed.

The present structure, of plastered stone, forty by fifty feet, was then erected at a cost of \$2,396.38. It stands several feet farther back from the highway (Route 100) than the previous building. The building committee consisted of Preacher John M. Ehst, Enos S. Gehman (later a deacon), and Samuel E. Bauer. On December 24, 25, 1899 services were held in the new Hereford meetinghouse.

Those who attended the 1725 conference from the "Manatant" were (Hans) Jacob Bechtel (d. 1739) and Daniel Langenecker (d. 1756). (The Hereford Mennonites have a local tradition that this conference was held in the Hereford community. The Hereford delegates signed last on the list of those who subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. Abraham Gable, a trustee, testified in 1878, "The tradition is that conference was held in Hereford meetinghouse over a 100 years ago.") In 1728 Preacher George Bechtel (d. 1759) came to America and settled in the Hereford community. The next year came Peter Moll (d. 1759) who was, at least later, a Mennonite preacher at Hereford. The next official was Bishop John Bechtel (d. 1795). John Boyer (1762-1828) succeeded Bechtel, but in 1816 moved to Butler county, Pennsylvania. After him came Preacher Abraham Bechtel (1749-1815). The next preacher at Hereford was Henry S. Funk (1787-1826). John C. Bechtel was ordained preacher in 1816 and bishop in 1830. In 1827 John Z. Gehman (1793-1882) was ordained. Christian Clemmer (1813-1883) was chosen as minister on November 17, 1842. He followed Oberholtzer in the division of 1847. To fill this vacancy John B. Bechtel (1807-1889) was ordained in 1848. Andrew S. Mack (1836-1917) was ordained preacher on September 15, 1863 and bishop on November 6, 1875. On June 3, 1886 John M. Ehst (1844-1923) was ordained to the ministry. The present ministers are John S. Kriebel, ordained on October 25, 1917, and Elias W. Kulp, ordained on May 17, 1923.

About a dozen deacons are known to have served Hereford. The first known is Philip High (1755-1828). The next, Henry Stauffer (1779-1856). John S. Bechtel (1786-1868) was another. In 1848 John Bowman, a Hereford deacon, united with Oberholtzer's Conference. On June 5, 1858 John L. Gehman (1819-1892) was ordained. Deacon John L. Gabel (1837-1887) was ordained October 17, 1872. Samuel H. Landis (1819-1880) served only a few years. Reuben S. Eschbach (1839-1901) was ordained in 1880. Abraham S. Gehman (1849-1905) was ordained on October 31, 1901.

His brother Enos S. (1855-1918) was ordained on October 25, 1906. The present deacon, Abraham G. Ehst, was ordained on May 29, 1919.

The Hereford Mennonites added to their original land purchase several times. On June 4, 1825 Jacob and Elizabeth Stauffer sold one acre and nine perches of land in Hereford township, Berks county, to the congregation for \$73.37½. The next purchase was one acre and one perch for \$70.43 on March 26, 1839. The grantor was Reuben K. Stauffer. On June 30, 1855 John and Sarah Melchior sold the congregation 33½ perches for \$10.46. On September 13, 1899 Nicholas Melchior and his wife, Mary, sold the congregation 8¾ perches for \$20.

The trustees in 1825 and 1839 were Abraham Gehman and Gerhard Bechtel. In 1855 Henry Diehl and Abraham S. Ehst were serving. Later trustees were John Stauffer, David Gehman, and Abraham S. Gehman. Solomon G. Gehman and Daniel Schantz are the present trustees. The present sexton is Eli H. Gehman.

The Hereford cemetery is very old. It was likely opened sometime between 1729 and 1747—the dates when Beidler bought and sold his land. Over 600 interments have been made. The earliest date found is cut on a field stone, "1758 A. D.", but no name is given. The earliest name and date are found on the stone of Maria, wife of Casper Bauman, (1711-1777). Fifty-nine family names are found, including Bechtel (78), Stauffer (65), Moyer (41), Bauman (40), Oberholtzer (36), Eshbach (34), Latshaw (25), Ehst, Mack, Weiss, Diehl, Strunk, Gehman, Berky, Landis, Buckwalter, and Bauer. In 1930 a perpetual fund was established for the maintenance of the cemetery. Burial lots are free, however. A transcription of the inscriptions of the tombstones was made in 1932-1933.

Hereford and Boyertown Mennonites are served by the same ministers and deacons. All ordinations, baptisms and communion services are held at Hereford. But Harvest Home services are held annually in both meeting-houses. The same Sunday-school officers serve at both places. **Services** are conducted as follows: On one Sunday morning Sunday school and church services are held at Hereford. In the evening of that Sunday song and church services are held at Boyertown. On the second Sunday, Sunday school is conducted at Boyertown in the morning. On the third Sunday, Sunday school and preaching services are conducted at Hereford; and on the fourth Sunday, Sunday school and preaching services at Boyertown. On the fifth Sunday another cycle is begun. Thus, church services are held every four weeks in the morning and every four weeks in the evening at Boyertown, and church services are held every two weeks in the morning at Hereford. The Sunday school alternates between Hereford and Boyertown, being held every Sunday morning. No evening services at all are held at Hereford, as at Franconia and Deep Run.

All services are now conducted in English except that the reading of the Scripture lesson is in German and the singing of one German hymn follows in the morning services. English was first introduced into the church service about 1900. Hymnbooks known to have been used are *Zions Harfe*, *Der Christliche Saenger*, *Psalms*, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, *Hymns and*

Tunes and the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*. Choristers since 1860 have been Abram S. Ehst, Andrew S. Mack, John M. Ehst, Henry S. Mack, Abram G. Ehst, David S. Gehman, John L. Ehst, Solomon G. Gehman, and Warren E. Beidler.

Available records of church accessions from 1829 to 1932 show that 232 were received into the church during that period. As this is being written a class of eleven is now under instruction (1936). The total membership at Hereford and Boyertown (1935) is 112.

After the division of 1847 both the "Old" and "New" Mennonite groups continued to use the meetinghouse. The trustee and poor funds were divided into equal parts. In 1850-51 the group led by Christian Clemmer erected a new meetinghouse near the old one. The congregation adhering to the Franconia Conference subsequently paid the new congregation \$75 for their interest in the old meetinghouse.⁴

The Hereford and Boyertown Mennonites (of the Franconia Conference) organized a Sunday school in 1899. After some years it was discontinued. In 1913 it was again started and has continued since. The same officers and teachers serve in both meetinghouses. Only two men have served as superintendent, Enos S. Gehman and John S. Longacre.

A Hereford young people's meeting convenes in Mennonite homes on Sunday evening, on two Sundays out of four.

The village in which the Hereford meetinghouses stand was first called Goshenhoppen, later Churchville. In 1860 when the post office was established it was named Bally in honor of Augustin Bally, a Catholic priest, who served there 1837-1882.

In 1839 Washington township was created from Colebrookdale and Hereford townships. Thus it came about that Hereford meetinghouse is now in Washington township.

⁴ An account of the division and the real estate involved written from the standpoint of the General Conference Mennonites but with documentary support is to be found in the *1914 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 29-32.

Chapter VII

BOYERTOWN

Reading Avenue, Boyertown, Berks County

This church¹ was formerly called Colebrookdale, being situated in that township, Berks county. Mennonites settled in Colebrookdale township in the eighteenth century and were members of the Hereford Mennonite Church in Washington township (then Hereford township). As a matter of convenience the Mennonites of Colebrookdale erected a meetinghouse of their own rather than ride their horses to the Hereford meetinghouse six miles north-northeast of the present Boyertown meetinghouse. Boyertown was thus a branch of the Hereford Church and even today the congregations are served by the same ministers. (These officials are listed in chapter VI.) All ordination, baptismal, and communion services are conducted at the Hereford Church. According to a local tradition the Boyertown Mennonites worshiped in a building "four miles up the valley" before they erected their first meetinghouse. This building "up the valley" may have been a dwelling.

The first meetinghouse was built, probably of logs, between 1772 and 1780. On December 7, 1772 Henry Stauffer bought two hundred acres of land from Thomas Rutter and Samuel Potts.² On April 2, 1780 Henry Stauffer and his wife, Mary, in consideration of the receipt of nine pounds in gold or silver money of Pennsylvania, granted to Abraham Bechtel and Henry High, their heirs and assigns, a lot of land containing one acre, "in trust, to and for the uses and trusts, interests and purposes hereinafter limited and declared, and to and for no other purpose whatsoever; that is to say, to the only use and behoof of the religious society or Mennonite congregation of Colebrookdale township aforesaid and the neighborhood, who now or hereafter may worship in the house already erected, or in such house or houses of worship which may be hereafter erected on said lot, to wit: for a burial ground, for keeping a school and meetings in the house already erected on said lot, and for erecting such other house of worship thereon, or such other pious and charitable uses or purposes as shall be thought proper by a majority of the congregation at large, called together, or as many of the regular members thereof as shall attend on due notice to give their votes in such a case." This one-acre lot, surveyed by Peter Richard, was bounded on the north by the land of Jacob Latshaw, on the east by the road to Olley Hills (now Reading Avenue, Boyertown), on the south by the road to Popodicon (now Philadelphia Avenue, Boyertown), and on the west by the land of the grantor, Henry Stauffer.

¹ Based chiefly on the historical sketch of Mary Latshaw Bower, *Christian Monitor*, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, September, 1935, pp. 270-272.

² Deed at Reading, B-1-358.

Several facts are established by the deed. One is that the house of worship was erected prior to the granting of the deed. Another is that in addition to religious services the meetinghouse should also be used for school purposes. And of course part of the land was for a burial ground.

In 1819 the original meetinghouse was displaced by a larger building, probably a plastered log structure, "having raised seats or benches similar to a gallery." In 1838 thirty people contributed towards the repair of the meetinghouse. The repairs must have not been very extensive for only \$40.50 was spent.

In 1847 occurred the Oberholtzer division. At Boyertown part of the congregation followed Oberholtzer and formed a new congregation. But the larger part of the members continued as a congregation of the Franconia Conference. All went well until 1876, both congregations worshipping on different Sundays in the same meetinghouse.

In 1876 the old congregation decided to erect a new meetinghouse. The building committee consisted of Jacob Bechtel, Samuel H. Landis, Joel B. Bauer, and Henry G. Gabel. The congregation served notice to the Oberholtzer (General Conference Mennonite) congregation, of their intention to build, offered them the continued use of the new meetinghouse on alternate Sundays, and invited them to contribute toward the building costs. But they stipulated that no "musical instruments or any other things objectionable to the old congregation" might be introduced into the new building. When the 1819 building was partly razed the General Conference Mennonite congregation served an injunction against the building committee, enjoining them against the tearing down of the meetinghouse, and sued for equal rights as tenants in common. The case was heard in the Berks County Court. On January 11, 1877 Judge Hagenman appointed B. F. Dettra, Esq., as Examiner and Master to hear the case. Dettra heard the testimony and on March 18, 1879 filed his report, recommending that the plaintiffs had no rights to the church property and were merely "tenants by sufferance." He therefore decided in favor of the old congregation and ordered the plaintiffs (the General Conference Mennonites) to pay the costs. Exceptions to the Master's report were immediately filed. Judge Hagenman appointed a second Master, Frank R. Shell, Esq., on December 23, 1879. On June 10, 1880 Shell submitted his report, recommending that the plaintiffs were tenants in common with the old congregation and that the latter be ordered to pay the costs. On August 12, 1882 Judge Hagenman ruled aside all exceptions, adopted the report of the second Master and ruled that both groups of Mennonites were tenants in common and that the old congregation (the defendants) should pay the costs. The case was appealed to the January Term, 1883 Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Eastern District.³ There the case was settled by recognizing the old congregation, adhering to the Franconia Conference, as the rightful owner of the property. The General Conference Mennonites immediately (1883) erected the Menno Simons Mennonite Church, 413 Fourth Street, Boyertown.

³ *Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Eastern District, January Term, 1883 Paper Book of Appellants, Reading, Pa., 1883.*

During all the time of litigation the construction of the meetinghouse on the site of the 1819 building was suspended, but at the close of the legal procedure the erection of the meetinghouse was finally completed. The new building is a one-story, brick structure, forty by fifty feet. The date on the cornerstone is 1879.

The first Master stated in his report that the Mennonites recognize the doctrine of nonresistance "in a modified form, the members of the church not being permitted to sue at law, but having the right of defending themselves in legal proceedings against wrong and injustice."⁴ It is true that Mennonites occasionally are involved in litigation, at least as defendants, but Jacob B. Mensch's minutes of the October, 1883 session of the Franconia Conference, record that the Brethren Joel Bower and Henry Gabel had violated the regulation of the nonresistant church in their Supreme Court litigation. The brethren sought the peace of conference for their transgression and also made an apology to the (Boyertown) church. Mennonites stand for a thoroughgoing nonresistance.

Judge Hagenman certainly spoke the truth when he handed down his decree. ". . . It is to be regretted that the members of this religious organization should have such differences which they cannot harmonize. The Mennonite Church is world-wide renowned for peace, brotherly love, and good will to all, and for the amicable settlement of all their difficulties among themselves in a Christian spirit. The Court is the last place to which they should resort, and indeed never should until all other amicable modes at an honest effort of adjustment have failed. Once in Court, immaterial how it may terminate, feelings of discord are often engendered, that many years will not allay. Neighbors who before were friends are parted forever. . . ."⁵

In 1847 the trustees were John Hoch and William Johnson.⁶ About 1855 Abraham Gable and Samuel H. Landis were elected trustees.⁷ More recent trustees have been Henry G. Gabel, Henry Y. Johnson, Joel B. Bower, the last of whom ceased to serve in 1933. The present trustees are Henry B. Bechtel and John S. Longacre.

The earliest known burial in the adjoining cemetery is that of Elizabeth Stauffer who died in 1802. A transcript of the tombstone inscriptions includes the following surnames: Bauer, Bahr, Bobb, Borneman, Braner, Brower, Bechtel, Bickel, Custer, Dotterer, Eschbach, Eis (Ehst), East, Focht, Fried, Fischer, Fritz, Gabel, Heinrich, Haws, Hoch, Ihst, Johnson, Koch, Kieser, Lobach, Landis, Merkel, Muthard, Moyer, Opdegraff, Reiter, Reiff, Stauffer, Werstler, Weiss, Yost, and Yoder; the most common being Bechtel, Gabel, Landis, Stauffer, and Yoder.

Sunday school and church services are held at Boyertown on one Sunday in the morning. A week later song and church services are held in the

⁴ *Supreme Court of Pa.*, January Term, 1883, p. XIV.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. XLVIII, XLIX.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

evening. On the third Sunday only Sunday school is held (in the morning). On the fourth Sunday there are no services at Boyertown. English was introduced into the service about 1900. The deacon still reads the Scripture lesson in German, and one German hymn in each church service is sung from the old *Zions Harfe. Hymns and Tunes* was the first English hymn-book used. The *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* has since displaced it.

Sunday school was started in 1899. After some years it was discontinued and was not revived until 1913. The same officers and teachers serve both the Boyertown and Hereford Mennonites. Only two men have served as superintendents, Enos S. Gehman and John S. Longacre. Evening services were started at Boyertown about 1920.

Dr. Joel B. Bower (1840-1933), a dentist, united with the Mennonite Church at the age of seventeen. He served the Boyertown Church as trustee and sexton for fifty years. He was the father of the historian of the congregation, Mary Latshaw Bower. In 1931 Dr. Bower was succeeded as sexton by John Shelly Longacre of Barto.

In 1931 the congregation adopted a new constitution and set of by-laws.

In 1914 the National Bank and Trust Company of Boyertown leased the part of the church property located at the intersection of Philadelphia and Reading Avenues and on it erected a bank building. From this lease the church receives an annual income, part of which is donated to various Mennonite missions.

Chapter VIII

EAST SWAMP, WEST SWAMP, SWAMP

Milford Township, Bucks County

Before beginning the history of these three churches one must explain why they are grouped together. The original Swamp meetinghouse was about one-half mile east of the present West Swamp building; its history may go back as far as two centuries ago. This first building corresponds to the present West Swamp meetinghouse. About 1771 the East Swamp building was erected about a mile east of the first Swamp meetinghouse. Both of these churches were for a long time served by the same officials. And both meetinghouses were claimed by the Oberholtzer group in 1847. Those Mennonites who remained a part of the Franconia Conference then built the present Swamp meetinghouse about a mile east of Steinsburg and located between the East and West Swamp meetinghouses. So although this chapter really deals with three meetinghouses it gives the history of the (Franconia Conference) Mennonites of the Swamp congregation from the beginning to present time.¹

Perhaps one reason for the early organization of the Swamp Mennonite Church was the coming of a Mennonite bishop, Valentine Clemmer, from Germany to "Grooten Schwamb," Great Swamp, in 1717. There was thus no ministerial lack to hinder the Mennonite settlers in the (present) northwestern part of Bucks county from organizing a congregation. Of course it is a question how formally "organizations" were then created by the Mennonites. Whenever a few Mennonite settlers came to a community they met for worship in one of the homes and a Mennonite preacher, either from their midst or elsewhere, preached for them. After some time they erected a meetinghouse, perhaps on land owned by one of the settlers for which no deed may have been granted for many years.

In the 1725 conference "Velte Clemer" was present from "Great-Swamp." He was naturalized in 1729.

According to a generally accepted tradition the first Swamp Mennonite meetinghouse was erected in 1735 on land then owned by William Allen, a non-Mennonite, but a man who donated land for church purposes at Deep Run and elsewhere. In 1743 Jacob Musselman (himself a Mennonite preacher) bought a tract of land from Allen in which was included the lot on which the first meetinghouse is reported to have been erected eight years previously. Evidently the congregation had never legally owned this lot. No cemetery adjoined this meetinghouse; all interments were made in a burying ground about a mile east of the meetinghouse. This first build-

¹ See the *1898 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 26, 27; J. H. Battle, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania* . . . Philadelphia, 1887, pp. 612, 613. The author is also indebted to the late U. S. Stauffer, Rev. W. S. Gottshall, Preacher John G. Gehman, and Deacon Harvey Landis, all of Quakertown, Pennsylvania, for information for this chapter.

ing was used until 1790. On January 18 of that year (Preacher) Michael Musselman, son of Preacher Jacob, conveyed eighty perches of land to Peter Zetty, Christian Hunsberger, and Michael Shelly, "elders or overseers of the Mennonite congregation." The first meetinghouse was then razed, moved to this new location and rebuilt. This is the site of the present West Swamp meetinghouse. It continued to be used for church and school purposes until 1819, when a stone building replaced it. This 1819 West Swamp Stone meetinghouse was also used for school purposes until 1873.

Attention will now be given to the East Swamp Mennonite meetinghouse. On June 15, 1771 Ulrich Drissel, Abraham Taylor, and John Lederach conveyed ninety-one perches of land to Valentine Clemmer, Peter Saiger, Christian Bieler, and Jacob Clemmer, "trustees of the religious society or congregation of Mennonites in the East Swamp." This was the location of the Swamp cemetery mentioned above. After the East Swamp meetinghouse was erected, services were held there and at West Swamp alternately. After some years this East Swamp meetinghouse was destroyed by fire. A log meetinghouse was at once erected in its place. This (second) East Swamp Mennonite meetinghouse served both church and school purposes, there being a partition in the building to separate the schoolroom from the assembly room. This building was used until 1850. The congregation acquired more land on August 17, 1818.

The East and West Swamp congregations gradually became two distinct organizations. East Swamp was the smaller, often having a church membership of less than a hundred.

The Mennonites who remained in the Franconia Conference built their present meetinghouse in 1847. It is called the Swamp Mennonite meetinghouse. It is thirty-six feet, nine inches by forty-two feet, eight inches, in size.

The following men are known to have served the Swamp congregation from the beginning until 1847: Bishop Valentine Clemmer; Preacher Jacob Musselman; Bishop Jacob Meyer (1721-1790) of the Saucon congregation probably officiated as bishop; Preacher Michael Musselman (was serving in 1773); and his son, Bishop Samuel Musselman (1764-1842); Preacher Jacob Nold; Preacher Christian Bliem; Preacher Christian Zetty (1766-1843); Preacher Jacob Histan (1791-1877), ordained in 1832, moved to Doylestown in 1842.

In 1847 there was a division in the conference when sixteen ordained men, including John Hunsicker the senior bishop of the conference, John H. Oberholtzer, and other ministers and deacons, withdrew and formed a separate conference. One Sunday morning (probably in 1847) Preacher Henry Nice, Deacon Abraham M. Clemmer, and the latter's son, Elihu (still living) found themselves locked out of the West Swamp Mennonite meetinghouse. Philip Geissinger donated land to the group remaining in the Franconia Conference on which they built a meetinghouse the same year (1847).

From this point on this chapter will deal only with the Swamp Church. The East and West Swamp congregations, which followed John H. Oberholtzer in the schism, will be further treated in Part V, Chapter II.

After the division the Swamp congregation was without a minister. Preacher Jacob Beidler (1809-1874) was very soon ordained for the now small congregation. Deacon Abraham Schantz (1805-1870) was ordained in 1849. Preacher Abraham Young (1817-1887) was ordained in 1863. Deacon Abraham B. Landis (1834-1897) was ordained in 1870. Preacher John A. Beidler (1840-1912) was ordained September 12, 1874.

The occasion of the next ordination is not a pleasant story. A number of people found fault with certain mistakes which Preacher Abraham Young made. Certain of his actions were a bit ill-advised at times. Finally he was relieved of his office. When he was deposed he challenged the leaders to find a successor. On November 3, 1886 Enos Beidler (1835-1918) was ordained. He was a fine Christian, a prosperous farmer, and possessed a pleasing personality. But he never accepted the office to which he was ordained. In 1890 conference appointed two deacons to visit Beidler to ascertain if he could not be persuaded to preach. This was of no avail. After John Beidler died in 1912 the congregation was without a resident pastor, being supplied by conference with visiting ministers, until October 21, 1919 when the present senior minister, John G. Gehman, was ordained. Brother Gehman was then the only minister until 1929 when Preacher David L. Gehman of the Doylestown congregation moved into the community and assisted him. Finally on October 31, 1935 Abram D. Yoder was ordained to the ministry and he and Brother Gehman are now serving the Swamp congregation as preachers.

Deacon Abraham B. Landis died in 1897. On November 4 of that year Deacon Henry Yoder (1853-1930) was ordained to succeed him. On May 16, 1922 the present deacon, Harvey S. Landis, was ordained.

Recent choristers are Philip Geysinger and W. P. Gehman.

From 1847 until 1887 the only services were the regular Sunday morning church services every two weeks. In 1887 a Sunday school was started and continued until 1895 (probably discontinued each winter); it then was discontinued until 1916 when it was started the second time. The first superintendent was Christian Musselman; others since have been Henry Beidler, John G. Gehman, Harvey S. Landis (1920-1928), Alvin Rosenberger (1928-31), and Henry G. Yoder (1931-).

Since 1900 the congregation has created a fund for the perpetual upkeep of the cemetery and grounds.

In 1924 the congregation began to meet for evening services every four weeks. Since that time another meeting has been added to strengthen the spiritual life of the congregation. Every two weeks Bible study (the Sunday-school lesson for the next Sunday) and a children's meeting are conducted on Sunday evening. These meetings are held on the same Sundays when Sunday school and church services are held in the morning.

Prior to about 1914 the old German hymnbook, *Zions Harfe*, was used. About 1914 *Hymns and Tunes* was introduced; and in 1927 the new *Church Hymnal* displaced the *Hymns and Tunes*.

In 1920 and 1921 Sunday-school meetings were held a few times.

Since about 1919 a church record has been kept. May many more congregations do likewise.

Chapter IX

SPRINGFIELD

Springfield Township, Bucks County

The early history of the Springfield Mennonite Church is inadequately known. In 1773 the Franconia bishops mentioned a "Term" congregation in the Swamp district.¹ As far as is known no one has ever identified "Term." But while gathering data for this history the author found an article on the Durham Valley which extends through Durham and Springfield townships, Bucks county. The Durham Valley is drained by a stream known at various times as Shook's or Squook's creek, and Durham creek. The Springfield Mennonite meetinghouse is located in a branch of the Durham Valley. Durham is "Term!" Hess writes,^{1a} "Continuing our journey northward, before reaching Pleasant Valley, casting the eye in a north-westerly direction, distant about one-half mile or more, in a little grove, delightfully located on high ground, may be seen a low stone building, the old Mennonite meetinghouse, the first one in the township, erected in 1780." Since the Springfield meetinghouse is located in the Durham Valley it seems quite reasonable to believe that the "Term" of 1773 was Springfield.

It has been believed that because the Moyer, Funk, Landis, Gehman, and Schlieffer families were located in Springfield township by 1750 the Mennonite congregation must be at least one hundred eighty-five years old.² George Schimmel emigrated from Germany and settled in Springfield in 1753. "The first church may be supposed to have been built prior to the Revolution."² Hess probably got the date 1780 from Davis.³ It is entirely possible that the Springfield Mennonites did worship in their homes for thirty years, but it doesn't seem probable. Unfortunately Mr. Davis does not indicate where he got the date 1780 for the date of building the first meetinghouse.

The present meetinghouse was erected of stone in 1824, as a stone in the north wall of the building indicates.⁴ In addition to the date 1824, the stone also has the names, J. Moyer, and A. Sliefer, cut upon it. The building is thirty by forty feet in size.

¹ See the 1773 letter in the Appendix of this volume.

^{1a} Asher L. Hess, "Picturesque and Historic Durham Valley," *The Pennsylvania German*, East Greenville, Pa., May, 1908, p. 197. The author is also indebted to Rev. Allen M. Fretz for some of the data contained in this chapter.

² J. H. Battle, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 640. See also the 1903 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 36.

³ William W. H. Davis, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania* Vol. II, New York and Chicago, 1905, p. 76. But Davis' footnote stating that the two branches of Mennonites may have united indicates carelessness on the part of someone.

⁴ Battle's date 1826 is incorrect: Perhaps D. K. Cassel got his date (1826) from Battle, *Geschichte Der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, p. 119.

The first known resident minister was Peter Meyer who came from Switzerland, by way of the Palatinate, to America about 1741. He was ordained in 1773, unless the Peter Meyer referred to in the 1773 letter is not the same man. Meyer was succeeded by the following preachers, Jacob Gehman, Peter Moyer (1761-1834), Bishop Jacob Y. Moyer (1791-1859), ordained to the ministry about 1826; Abraham Geisinger (1789-1871), ordained about 1844.⁵ This brings the ministerial list down to 1847. The first known deacon is Jacob⁶ Schlieffer. He was succeeded by Abraham Oberholtzer and Daniel Geisinger.

In the division of 1847 all the ministers remained in the Franconia Conference. Deacon Daniel Geissinger, however, united with Oberholtzer's Conference in 1848. Jacob Kolb (1806-1893) was the last deacon of the Springfield (Franconia Conference) Mennonite Church.

Only one more man served Springfield as a preacher after Moyer and Geisinger. His name was Samuel Moyer (1806-1877). There is a dispute as to which group ordained him, but it is agreed that he was for a short time identified with Oberholtzer's Conference, and that, as a minister, he was received into the Franconia Conference. Since his death visiting ministers from other parts of the Conference have supplied the Springfield pulpit.

In 1888 there were about twenty members in the congregation. Today the membership consists of three families with eleven baptized members.

Sunday school and church services are conducted every two weeks except during the winter, when they are held every four weeks. The General Conference Mennonites have their services on alternate Sundays. The Sunday schools have often been considered one but the organ is not used on the (Franconia Conference) Mennonite Sunday. And some of the Franconia Conference Mennonites attend the Swamp Mennonite Sunday School on alternate Sundays. But the superintendent of both Sunday schools is Ely R. Fretz, a General Conference Mennonite. Springfield is the only Mennonite meetinghouse in which the Franconia and General Conference Mennonites still use the same building for their services. But the "Johnson" Mennonites also worship in the Providence and Worcester meetinghouses of the Franconia Conference.

Springfield and Saucon are sister congregations. Just how much early ministers were identified with one or the other congregation is difficult to determine.

The General Conference Mennonite congregational history from 1847 to 1936 is given in Part V, Chapter II.

⁵ His tombstone inscription states that he served as preacher of the Springfield Mennonite Church 27 years; yet Battle and Cassel both state that he was ordained in 1836.

⁶ D. K. Cassel says T. Schlieffer.

Chapter X

SALFORD

Lower Salford Township, Montgomery County

In 1728 Henry Ruth of New Britain township, Bucks county, purchased two hundred acres of land in Salford township, Philadelphia county (Lower Salford township was formed in 1741). By 1738 there was already a Salford Mennonite congregation.¹ The Salford Mennonites probably worshiped at Skippack prior to the erection of their first meetinghouse. On the fourth and fifth days of October, 1738 Henry and Modlena "Rutt" of Salford by deeds of lease and release, in consideration of fourteen pounds, eight shillings and sixpence, conveyed ten acres and forty perches of land to "Henry ffunk Dielman Kolb Christian Myre Jun and Abraham Reiff all of Salford afores^d & Adjacent thereunto. . . ." A building was already on the land when the deed was granted: ". . . A certain Messuage Tenement and a Piece of Land whereon the Same Now Stands, Situate in Salford Afores^d. . . ." The grantor signed, "henrich Ruth," and "Modlena Rutt" made her mark. All these four grantees were, or later became, ordained men; Funk, a bishop; Kolb, a preacher; and Meyer and Reiff, deacons.

The following January these four grantees executed a deed of trust to seventeen members of the church. Strassburger states that Robert Jones of Worcester, a witness, wrote the deed. This document is rather lengthy but since it is one of the oldest deeds of trust in the whole district it certainly should be published in this history.

A word of explanation is necessary. It appears in this deed that it was made after October, 1738. And yet it is dated, January 25, 1738. It should probably be dated January 25, 1738/39, meaning 1739. Prior to 1752 English law prescribed that the official year should begin in March. However, long before 1752 people thought of the year as beginning on January 1. So for the days between January 1 and March 25 the double year was written. Thus January 25, 1739 was written, January 25, 1738/39. In the case before us they evidently failed to write the 1739.

DEED OF TRUST HENRY FUNK ET AL TO NICHOLAS HALDERMAN ET AL

This Indenture made the twenty fifth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty eight Between Henry Funk, Christian Myre Junr. Abraham Reiff of Franconia and Dilman

¹ On this chapter all the ordained men of the congregation were of assistance. See also, Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *The Strassburger Family and Allied Families of Pennsylvania*, Gwynedd Valley, Pa., 1922, pp. 404-408. James Y. Heckler, *History of Lower Salford Township*, Harleysville, Pa., 1888, pp. 420-426, and under Corrections and Explanations; Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, pp. 951, 952. *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., April, 1932, pp. 69-70.

Kolb of Salford all in the county of Philadelphia yeoman of the one part and Nicholas Holderman Christian Allabaugh Henry Rutt Hans Ulrich Berge Hans Wyerman and Garrett Clemmens Feltus Kratz Jacob Clements Johannes Clements Hans Reiff Frederick Alderffer of Salford aforesaid Christian Myre Senr, Andrew Swartz Henry Clemmer Jacob Hackman and Ulrich Hunsberger Jacob Landes of Franconia aforesaid all in the Said County Yeoman of the other part whereas Henry Ruth and Modlena his wife by their Indentures of Lease and Release under their hands and seals bearing date of the fourth and fifth days of October Ao Di 1738 for the Consideration therein mentioned did Grant and Confirm unto the said Henry Funk Christian Myre Junr Abraham Reiff and Dillman Kolb their heirs and assigns a certain messuage or tenement and piece of Land whereon the Same now stands in Salford aforesaid Beginning at a Black oak standing in the line of Jacob Clemens land thence by the Same North East forty perches to a stake set for a Corner thence South East by the Sd Clements land forty perches to another stake set for a Corner thence South west dividing it from the said Henry Rutt's other land forty perches to a Stake set for a Corner thence North west by the Said Rutt's Land forty perches to the Place of Beginning Containing ten acres of land to hold to them the Sd Henry Funk Christian Myre Junr Abraham Reiff and Dillman Kolb their heirs and assigns forever and by the said recited Indenture of release appears Now this Indenture Witnesseth that the said Henry Funk Christian Myre Junr Abraham Reiff and Dillman Kolb do by these Presents declare publish and make known that the said Conveyance or assurance of the Sd messuage or tenement and piece of Land so made to them their heirs and assigns as aforesaid were upon a Special trust and Confidence that they the Sd Henry Funk Christian Myre Junr Abraham Reiff and Dillman Kolb and the Survivor or Survivors of them shall upon request Convey and assure the Sd messuage or tenement and piece of Land with all their appurtenances unto Such person or Persons and for Such Estate or estates in such sort manner or form and to such uses and purpose with and under Such Limitations and Restrictions as the said Nicholas Holdeman Christian Allabaugh Henry Ruth Hans Ulrich Berge Hans Wyerman Garret Clements Feltus Kratz Jacob Clements Johannes Clements Hans Reiff Frederick Alderffer Christian Myer Andrew Swartz Henry Clemer Jacob Hackman and Ulrich Hunsberger Jacob Landes or the Survivor or Survivors of them or the heirs and assigns of such Survivor Sall [sic] order and direct and that in the meantime until such Conveyance or assurance be made they the Said Henry Funk Christian Myre Abraham Reiff and Dellman Kolb and their heirs shall permit and Suffer the Said messuage or tenement to be and remain for a house and place of Religious meeting to and for the people called Baptists or Menonists within the Said Township of Salford and shall permit and Suffer the said piece of Land whereon the said messuage is erected and every part thereof with the appurtenances to be and remain a Burying place for the burrying and Intentering [sic] of all such persons as the said

People called Baptists or menonists shall allow of and for no other use whatsoever And the Said Henry Funk for himself his heirs Executors administrators and the Sd Christian Myre Jun. for himself his heirs Executors administrators and the Sd. Abraham Reiff for himself his heirs Executors and administrators the Sd Dellman Kolb for himself his heirs Executors administrators and each of them severally and not Jointly nor the one for the other or for the acts or deeds of the others or for the heirs Executors administrators of the other but for their own acts do Covenant promise and grant to and with the said Nicholas Holderman Christian Allabaugh Henry Ruth Hans Ulrich Berge Hans Wyerman Garrett Clements Feltus Kratz Jacob Clements Johanas Clements Hans Reiff Frederick Alderffer Christian Myre Andrew Swartz Henry Clemer Jacob Hackman Ulrich Hunsberger Jacob Landes and every of them their heirs and assigns by these Presents that they the said Henry Funk Christian Myer Abraham Reiff and Dellman Kolb shall and will at any time or times hereafter upon the reasonable request to them in that behalf made Convey and assure the Said messuage or tenement and Piece of land and premises with their appurtenances in manner and form aforesaid.

In Witness whereof the Sd parties to these Presents have Interchangeably set their hands and Seals hereunto dated the day and year first above written.^{1a}

Sealed and delivered in
the presence of us
John Kline
Robert Jones

Christian Moyer
Abraham Reiff
Henry Funk
Dillman Kolb

(This deed of trust was not recorded until May 6, 1820).

By 1763 two of the four trustees had died and the two surviving ones (Moyer and Reiff) made a new Declaration of Trust. This Declaration, bearing the date March 25, recites the fact of the original grant by Henry Ruth and wife to the four trustees, and in restating the purpose of the grant of land Moyer and Reiff say that the names of the trustees were used "... by the special nomination and appointment of the Christian Congregation called Menonists (alias Monistoe) who assemble to perform divine worship at a meeting house by them erected on the above described piece of land and that the said Indentures were made for the uses, services, benefit and conveniency of the said Congregation and fraternity to a meeting house and school house and a place for them to bury their dead. . . ."^{1b} This 1763 Declaration of Trust was granted to (Preacher, later Bishop) Christian Funk of Franconia township and Jacob Clemens of Lower Salford township. The Declaration raises two questions, When was school begun in the Salford Mennonite meetinghouse? and, Was Christian Funk attached to the Salford congregation?

^{1a} Deed at Norristown, *Deed Bk.* No. 36, p. 491.

^{1b} Deed at Norristown, *Book* 36, p. 493. The witnesses were John Detweiler and Martin Bechtel. This deed of trust was also recorded on May 6, 1820.

As to the first question, it is probable that school was conducted in the meetinghouse from the very beginning. The meetinghouse was probably erected prior to October, 1738. In that year Christopher Dock "opened two schools, one in Skippack and one in Salford which he taught three days alternately, and for the rest of his life he devoted himself to this labor unceasingly."² He died in 1771.

The second question relates to the congregational affiliation of Christian Funk. This is difficult to answer. His "home" congregation was Franconia. But as is indicated elsewhere in the book it appears that preachers were not quite so closely attached to any one congregation in the days before American independence as they now are. Christian Funk must have been in some way associated with the Salford congregation or he would not have shared in the new declaration of trust. The least reason one can see for so including him, if he was not a member of Salford, is that he was a preacher in the circuit which included Salford, and that he was so honored as the son of one of the original trustees.

James Y. Heckler states that on March 1, 1758 twenty-seven men, many of whom were Mennonites, bought one acre and eighty-two perches of land in the present village of Harleysville (where Mr. Harry Keeler now lives). This lot was owned by this group of men for twenty-three years. No one could tell Mr. Heckler the purpose for which the lot was used. But by piecing together bits of information he came to the conclusion that it may have been used for school purposes. The men were Mennonites, Dunkards, and Lutherans. On April 9, 1781 the seventeen survivors sold the tract.

Mr. Heckler has the following suggestion to offer, although it should be noted that this is purely a conjecture. The meetinghouse of 1738 served both church and school purposes. But in twenty years the school became too large for the building. It was at that time that the group of twenty-seven men bought the small tract in Harleysville and the school was continued in a building erected there. Again a decade or so passed by and this time the congregation outgrew the meetinghouse. It is believed that the first meetinghouse stood on the east side of the burying ground. About the year 1770 a larger meetinghouse was erected near the location of the present house of worship. This second meetinghouse was divided into two parts, one for the worshipers on Sundays, and the other for the school children during the week. Mr. Heckler supposes the school was then soon moved back into the meetinghouse, and in due time (1781) the lot in Harleysville was sold. Heckler's theory of a school in Harleysville seems plausible, but should not be accepted as certain history.

The meetinghouse which was torn down in 1850 was a stone building divided into two parts, as Heckler states. D. K. Cassel taught school in it in 1839. Cassel states that the last services were held in the old meetinghouse on April 7, 1850. On June 16 services were held in the new build-

² Samuel W. Pennypacker, *Historical and Biographical Sketches*, Philadelphia, 1883, p. 93. Also, Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh, *The Life and Work of Christopher Dock*, Philadelphia and London, 1908.

ing! The 1850 meetinghouse, also of stone, forty-five by fifty-five feet in size, was erected at a cost of \$1,300.00. In 1897 an addition, also costing \$1,300.00, was built to the 1850 structure. The size of the addition was about fourteen by forty-five feet. This building was used until 1924 when the fourth and present meetinghouse, fifty-six by eighty-eight feet in size, was erected of brick at a cost of \$22,000.00.

The schoolroom of the second meetinghouse was used until 1842 when an octagon schoolhouse was erected. The octagon school was displaced by a better building in 1883. Heckler lists the following teachers for the first century and a half: Christopher Dock (then a period of forty years when the names are lost), Jacob Humel, Christian Bergey, George Delp, Jacob Musselman, Henry Johnson, Daniel Moyer, William Godshalk, Isaac Grimley, John Boaz, Mr. Calendar, Henry A. Hunsicker, Solomon Snyder, Abraham Rosenberger, William Johnson, A. A. Delp, "and others." The schoolhouse standing on the Salford Church land was sold to the church trustees for \$100 in 1936. No one else could have purchased it for the church owned the land on which it was built.

Heckler wrote in 1888, "Probably soon after the first meetinghouse was built there was also a residence built here for the sexton and the place where it stood can still be seen. The first sexton in the memory of any one now living was Jacob De Haven, although he and his wife were Dunkhards they lived here fifty-four years; he died here about the year 1845, and is buried here After him Joseph Frederick lived here twenty-four years, and then Henry Schatz lived here five or six years. The present Sexton is Mahlon Schlatter who came here after Schatz, and has lived here thirteen years already; the present residence of the Sexton was built by the church in 1851 or 1852." The successor of Mahlon Slotter was Frank Freed who became sexton in 1890. After him was John Slotter and later came Jacob Groff. Since 1915 Wellington H. Ruth has been sexton.

Ministers known to have been affiliated with the congregation are, Bishop Henry Funk (d. 1760); Dielman Kolb (1691-1756); Andrew Ziegler (?) (1737-1811); Christian Haldeman (1744-1833); Isaac Alderfer (1773-1842); John Bergey (1783-1865); Jacob Kolb (1799-1867); Isaac K. Clemens (1813-1895), ordained January 27, 1853; Henry S. Bower (1836-1909), ordained November 30, 1865; Jacob C. Moyer (1839-1921), ordained July 21, 1881; Henry M. Clemmer (1849-1936) ordained deacon November 14, 1888 and preacher October 22, 1908; Rein A. Alderfer (1877-), ordained May 27, 1915; and Elias N. Landis (1897-), ordained October 25, 1928. Only the last two preach in English, all the others spoke in German.

As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, two of the four trustees in 1738 were deacons, Christian Moyer (1705-1787) and Abraham Reiff (d. 1763). Others known to have been deacons are, Jacob Kolb (1745- ?); John Lederach (1775-1848); Benjamin M. Detweiler (1793-1868); Henry C. Kolb (1812-1894), ordained November 30, 1865—on the same date as Preacher Henry S. Bower was ordained; Henry M. Clemmer (1849-1936), ordained November 14, 1888, later as preacher; Isaac M. Clemmer (1858-1925), brother of Preacher Henry M., ordained June 3, 1909; and Henry

M. Ruth (1877-), ordained May 28, 1925. Preacher Henry M. Clemmer submitted the following list of men who have served as choristers for the congregation, William Godshall, Senior; William Godshall, Junior; Jacob Groff; Jacob Alderfer; Isaac Clemens; Allen Nice; and Horace Alderfer.

The congregation bought eight additional tracts of land, totaling eight acres and nineteen perches, in 1837, 1853, 1860 (2), 1884 (2), 1890, and 1892. In 1837 the trustees were Henry Clemens and Jacob Clemens. In 1853 and 1860 the trustees were Abraham O. Alderfer, John Freed and Garret Clemens. The following have since been elected: John Clemmer, 1869; John Schutt; Mahlon Slotter, 1883; William K. Gottshall, 1884; Henry N. Clemens, 1889; Elias R. Landis, 1889; Isaac M. Clemmer, 1896; John B. Clemens, 1904; Henry M. Landis, 1909; Abraham L. Landis, 1925; and Wellington N. Clemens, 1930.

On the pulpit of the present meetinghouse is a first edition, 1743 *Saur* Bible. On the inside of the front cover is an inscription which states that it was purchased October 27, 1747 for twenty shillings of the church (treasury) and that it shall remain for the church.³

The oldest known tombstone was that of Ann Reiff who died in 1741. But by 1888 it was breaking into pieces. Heckler lists the following names on the tombstones: "Alderfer, Allebach, Anderson, Anthony, Bean, Bealer, Benner, Bechtel, Bergey, Boger, Boorse, Boyer, Butterweck, Cassel, Clemens, Clemmer, Custer, Delp, Detweiler, Dettory, Eisenhart, Frederick, Freed, Gergas, Godschall, Groff, Greis, Halteman, Heckler, Hedrick, Hendricks, Hoese, Haering, Hubler, Hunsperger, Johnson, Keely, Kinsey, Klein, Kolb, Kulp, Kratz, Krupp, Larkens, Landes, Lederach, Lower, Metz, Metzger, Markley, Moyer, Musselman, Neisz, Nyce, Oster, Ott, Overholtzer, Pannepacker, Richards, Ritter, Rife, Rosenberger, Saylor, Sander, Shelley, Schaefer, Springer, Scholl, Schott, Sleifer, Snyder, Stiver, Strunk, Stoll, Stiefel, Schwenk, Stauffer, Schatz, Schlotterer, Schultz, Tyson, Trumbauer, Wambold, Weand, Weber, Weil, Weirman, Ziegler. The Alderfers are the most numerous." Bean's *History of Montgomery County* observes, "The tombstones are of various sizes and designs, some being four and a half feet high, and the inscriptions are about as numerous now (1884) in English as in German. The Mennonites, though a plain people in dress, unlike the Society of Friends, permit individuals to exercise their own judgment respecting the size, inscription and pattern of their monuments, as may be observed in any of their cemeteries."

"In 1884 the membership was upwards of two hundred and fifty." The membership is now upwards of three hundred and fifty. The congregation has not had a phenomenal growth like Franconia, but it has prospered. Salford had no schisms. The Sunday school has prospered. It is difficult to set a definite date for the beginning of the Sunday-school organization. The first Sunday schools met in schoolhouses and frequently started and stopped. About 1872 Abraham Kindig, a Dunkard, organized a union

³ "Solforth Tounschib am 27 october 1747 ist Diesse bibel gekauft Vor 20 schill . . . auss dem gemeinen und Soll Bleiben Vor die gemeine."

Sunday school in Kindigs' schoolhouse one mile east of Harleysville. No doubt many Mennonites attended it. The Salford Mennonite Sunday School was established in the meetinghouse about 1889. Allen A. Freed was the first superintendent. Those who have served as superintendent since Freed are John Clemmer; A. A. Groff; Isaac Derstine; G. S. Nice; John Lederach; E. D. Godshall, 1909; Isaac Clemmer; Wilson A. Alderfer; Norman Hess; Samuel C. Landis, 1929; Norman Hess, 1930; Melvin Alderfer, 1931; William Kulp, 1932; M. K. Kerr, 1933; Enos D. Godshall, 1934; Samuel C. Landis, 1935; Isaiah T. Landis, 1936.

In April, 1936 a Sunday School Teachers' Meeting was started. The Sunday-school teachers and others assemble in the meetinghouse every Saturday evening to study the lesson of the next day.

The church has two sisters' sewing circles. The Dorcas Sewing Circle was organized November 8, 1934 at the home of Edna Weber. The first officers were Mrs. Marvin Anders, president; Mrs. J. A. Allebach, vice-president; Edna Weber, secretary; Mrs. Earl Anders, treasurer. The group meets the first Saturday afternoon of each month. They buy and repair clothing, furnish household articles, bedding and clothing for the needy of the community, children's homes, hospitals, and missions at home and abroad. They also distribute food to needy families; send books, flowers, and fruit to the sick; and visit them. About twenty members comprise the group.

The other circle was organized in 1935 and does similar work.

Chapter XI

FRANCONIA

Franconia Township, Montgomery County

The largest congregation in the whole Franconia Conference had a very small beginning. As far as is now known the oldest deed the congregation possesses was granted in 1834. What is the story of the first century?¹

Among the early settlers in Franconia township were two Mennonites, Christian Meyer, Senior, and Henry Rosenberger, Senior. Both bought adjoining farms in 1729. Rosenberger soon set aside a tract for a burying ground. This is now the oldest section of the Franconia Church cemetery. It was perhaps not so many years before a log building was erected on a lot adjoining the southwest side of the burying ground. The oldest grave-stones having legible dates are 1766, but interments were made prior to that time.

In 1745 Henry Rosenberger, Junior, became the owner of his father's farm. Still later it was sold to the son-in-law of Henry, Junior, John Swartley. During all this time the congregation was evidently worshipping in the log building² and burying in the Rosenberger³ cemetery. In the course of time Swartley died (1817), but not before he provided for the exclusion from his farm of several lots which had probably been considered church property for a long time. On April 18, 1818 his executors conveyed part of his farm to his son, Joseph R. Swartley. Part of the boundary description reads as follows, ". . . thence by the meeting house lot as follows—viz, north forty eight degrees west 1.85 perches to a post; thence north forty-two degrees east 2 perches to a corner of the graveyard wall; thence along the outside thereof north forty-eight degrees west 8.15 perches to another corner of said wall and by the same north forty-two degrees east 8.12 perches to a post in the line of Joseph Freed's land; thence by the same

¹ Bishop A. G. Clemmer and Samuel R. Swartley both contributed valuable manuscript histories. Elihu D. Clemmer, now in his ninety-fifth year, was interviewed many times. Mr. Swartley has an article on Franconia in *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., October, 1933, pp. 69-73. Henry S. Landes wrote fine local historical sketches for the *Souderton Independent*, published in book form in 1934, *History of Souderton*. . . . Bishop Christian Funk of Franconia in 1809 wrote a polemic which is valuable historically, *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1813.

² When John D. Souder was but a youth he wrote a series of articles for the local press. These were published at Harleysville, Pa., in 1886, *History of Franconia Township*. Mr. Souder conjectured that a stone meetinghouse was erected in 1730. D. K. Cassel accepted the date, published it, and it is still considered reliable history. The first stone meetinghouse was not erected until one hundred three years later (1833).

³ Henry Rosenberger, Junior, was a deacon. The meetinghouse is called "Rosenberger's" by Christian Funk, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

north forty-eight degrees and three-fourths west 121.75 perches" This excluded from his farm both the lot on which the log building stood and the cemetery, but no deed was ever given to the congregation for this portion of the present cemetery.

There is no clear evidence as to when the log building was erected. It served both school and church purposes, and was razed soon after 1833. Abraham M. Clemmer (1793-1879) told his son Elihu (1842-) that it had stood over a hundred years. There is no way to ascertain the reliability of this tradition. The first mention of the Franconia Mennonite meeting is in the will of Christian Meyer, Senior, made January 18, 1748. He bequeathed two pounds to the poor of the Mennonite meetings of Salford and Franconia townships and county of Philadelphia. Franconia may have been an outpost of the Salford congregation for many years.

The Rosenberger burying ground is in the eastern part of the present cemetery, and has many red field stones in it. Elihu Clemmer states that when he helped dig the double grave of Henrich H. and Henrich G. Bergey in November, 1883 he uncovered stones which old people declared were foundation stones of the original building. Certainly they belonged either to the building foundations or to the cemetery wall. The log building stood on a small lot along the southwestern side of this original burying ground.

Both Christian Meyers, Senior and Junior, were interested in the Franconia congregation. One of them, probably the younger, who was a deacon, gave the congregation about a half acre of land but failed to make a legal transfer. In the deed of May 1, 1794 of Samuel Meyers to his son Christian a half acre was excluded from the eighty-five acre tract Christian received. But still the congregation received no deed for their lot. Finally on February 1, 1834 Rudolph Moyer and his wife, Barbara, conveyed a tract of one acre and thirteen perches of land, which included the earlier donation of a half acre, to the congregation. This is the site of the present meetinghouse and is the oldest deed the congregation possesses! The tract was granted "... for the benefit and convenience of the society or fraternity of Christians called or distinguished by the name Mennonists holding those principles contained in a Confession of Faith . . . printed at Amsterdam and reprinted at Philadelphia, A. D. 1727, the hereby granted one acre and thirteen perches . . . to be and remain for said society and fraternity to build a house upon for public worship of Almighty God or a school house or both . . . and to be a place for them to bury their dead" ⁴

No deed was ever given for the original building nor for the first cemetery. The 1834 deed is the oldest deed the congregation has, and yet it is believed that the second meetinghouse was built before the deed was granted. For over the lintel of one of the doors there was a stone on which the date 1833 was cut. Evidently a schoolhouse was soon built, also, for Elihu Clemmer attended school in a building near the meetinghouse when he was a boy.

The free public school law of Pennsylvania was passed in 1834, but its acceptance by the townships was optional. Elihu says the school which he

⁴ *Deed Book* 155, p. 206, (Norristown).

attended was a Mennonite school. When Franconia township adopted the public school system (about 1851) ^{4a} Preacher Henry Nice, the Mennonite school teacher at Franconia, called a meeting to decide whether to continue the parochial school or to adopt the public school plan. The latter course was decided upon.

The 1833 meetinghouse was enlarged in 1866; the dimensions given in Bean's *History*⁵ are probably those of the enlarged meetinghouse. Bean says the building measured forty-five by seventy-five feet.

In 1892 the 1833 building was razed and a new stone meetinghouse, size seventy-two and one-half feet by fifty-nine feet, was erected at a cost of \$4,710.26. In 1917 an addition, size thirty-three and one-half by fifty-nine feet was added at a cost of \$6,729.10. The building committee for the addition was composed of Henry M. Nice, Isaac L. Gehman, and Henry B. Clemmer, assisted by the ordained men of the congregation. In 1930 a water system and lavatory facilities were installed at a cost of \$3,000. The auditorium still has no lighting facilities; no evening services are held.

Additional land was purchased for cemetery purposes in 1844, 1858, 1880, and 1900. Other land was purchased to enlarge the grounds in 1867 (twice). The congregation now owns eleven and one-half acres of land.

A few years ago an aged woman, Mary Yoder, was living in Souder-ton. She attended a communion service at the Franconia meetinghouse about 1850. She said seventy-one people partook. If her statement is correct, it would seem to indicate that the congregation then numbered less than a hundred. Perhaps it had not fully recovered from the Funkite schism of 1778.^{5a} But by 1884 the membership was more than four hundred. For about the last twenty years the *Mennonite Year Book and Directory* reports the Franconia membership as seven hundred twenty-five.

One of the treasures of the congregation is an alms book which has been used since 1756, though at first it was not a strictly congregational book. The book is large, measuring about eight and one-fourth inches, by twelve and five-eighths inches by one and one-half inches. Its stiff covers are covered with heavy paper. The pages are marked for receipts or disbursements in pounds, shillings, and pence. Only a brief discussion of the book can be given here.⁶

The book has usually been in the care of a Franconia deacon since the beginning; since 1811 without exception. The book contains receipts, disbursements, and audits. After a number of years only the audits were recorded. These audits began in 1767 (for the year 1765) and have been made every year or two since that time; every year since 1911. During the greater part of the first century the audits were signed by almost all of the ordained men of the Franconia congregation; by some officials from the

^{4a} Henry S. Landes, *op. cit.*, . . . , p. 29.

⁵ Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 829.

^{5a} See Part V, Chapter I.

⁶ See my article in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen, Indiana, July, 1936, for a more extended treatment.

Rockhill, Plain, Lexington, and Salford congregations; and by a few laymen.⁷

It may be that I failed to identify all the ordained men who signed the audits, so I have listed all the signers, indicating the first and last years in which they signed, and in parentheses the number of times they signed. Others may thus continue historical research.

1. Christian Funk ⁸	1767-1778	(8)
2. Samuel Bechtel ⁹	1767-1796	(9)
3. Jacob Funk ¹⁰	1767-1773	(5)
4. Michael Dirstein ¹¹	1767-1772	(4)
5. Jacob Clemens	1769	(1)
6. Henrich Sauter	1769	(1)
7. Abraham Gehman ¹²	1770-1789	(9)
8. Johannes Jansen	1770	(1)
9. Henrich Rosenberger ¹³	1770-1779	(7)
10. Jacob Oberholtzer ¹⁴	1775-1811	(16)
11. Abraham Landes	1778	(1)
12. Johannes Weyerman ¹⁵	1779, 1784	(2)
13. Johannes Birki ¹⁶	1779-1799	(9)
14. Johannes Berge ¹⁶	1801-1848	(12)
15. Mark Fretz ¹⁷	1784, 1785	(2)
16. Isaac Dirstine ¹⁸	1784	(1)
17. Christian Schwartz	1784-1787	(3)
18. Christian Halteman ¹⁹	1791	(1)
19. David Ruth ²⁰	1796-1807	(3)

⁷ All those without footnotes are to be regarded as laymen.

⁸ A prominent bishop of the Franconia congregation, 1731-1811; ordained preacher in 1756 or 1757 and bishop in 1769. Excommunicated in 1778. (See Part V).

⁹ ? -1802; a Rockhill preacher.

¹⁰ 1730-1816; a Franconia preacher. In 1774 he moved to Cheltenham township and united with the Germantown congregation.

¹¹ 1712-1777; a Rockhill deacon.

¹² ? -1792; a Rockhill preacher.

¹³ 1725-1809; a Franconia deacon.

¹⁴ ? -1813; a Franconia preacher. On the Franconia pulpit is a 1776 *Saur* Bible. Over Genesis 1:1 is written (in German) "This Bible or Holy Scripture belongs to the Mennonite Church in Franconia Township in Montgomery County where Jacob Oberholtzer and Abraham Gehman serve." Gehman was in the "Circuit," but his "home" congregation was Rockhill where he is buried. The Bible was purchased in 1785.

¹⁵ A deacon of the Plain congregation.

¹⁶ There was a Preacher John Bergey (1759-1841) of the Franconia congregation and a Preacher John Bergey (1783-1865) of the Salford congregation. They cannot be clearly distinguished in the alms book.

¹⁷ 1750-1840; a Lexington deacon.

¹⁸ 1744-1799; evidently a Rockhill deacon.

¹⁹ 1744-1833; a Salford preacher.

²⁰ ? -1820; a bishop at Lexington (perhaps was of the Plain congregation for a time).

20. Samuel Gehman ²¹	1799-1811	(5)
21. Jacob Kolb ²²	1801-1813	(5)
22. Henrich Kolb ²³	1801, 1842, '44, '45, '46	
23. Jacob Gottschall ²⁴	1805-1841	(23)
24. Jacob Fried ²⁵	1808-1811	(3)
25. Joseph Friedt	1811	(1)
26. Johannes Benner	1814	(1)
27. Philip Neiss	1814	(1)
28. Abraham Neiss ²⁶	1815, 1850, 1881	
29. Johannes Fried	1814, 1830	(2)
30. Johannes Leterach ²⁷	1822-1827	(3)
31. Abraham Fried	1834-1841	(4)
32. Henrich Neiss ²⁸	1841-1881	(26)
33. Johannes Kropp ²⁹	1841	(1)
34. Jacob Kulp ³⁰	1848	(1)
35. Johannes Geil ³¹	1848, 1850	(2)
36. Jacob Detweiler ³²	1850	(1)

(NOTE: From this point to the end of the list all the signers are members of the Franconia congregation. The alms book has become a congregational book.)

37. Jacob P. Landes ³³	1851-1874	(10)
38. Josia Clemmer ³⁴	1863-1905	(17)
39. Henrich Hakman ³⁵	1866-1868	(3)
40. Abraham Clemmer ³⁶	1869	(1)
41. Henrich Musselman ³⁷	1876-1881	(3)
42. Michael R. Moyer ³⁸	1884-1911	(14)
43. Jacob A. Fried ³⁹	1886-1927	(17)

²¹ 1767-1845; a Rockhill preacher.

²² 1745- ? ; a Salford deacon.

²³ He has been called a preacher but seems to have been only a prominent layman of the Salford congregation.

²⁴ 1769-1845; a prominent bishop of the Franconia congregation.

²⁵ 1768-1847; a Franconia deacon.

²⁶ Probably laymen.

²⁷ 1775-1848; a Salford deacon.

²⁸ 1804-1883; a prominent Franconia preacher.

²⁹ 1779-1842; a preacher of the Plain congregation.

³⁰ 1798-1875; a bishop of the Plain congregation.

³¹ 1778-1866; a Lexington preacher.

³² 1795-1879; a Rockhill preacher.

³³ 1803-1895; a preacher.

³⁴ 1827-1905; a bishop.

³⁵ 1817-1884; a deacon.

³⁶ 1793-1879; a deacon.

³⁷ The last layman to sign the audits.

³⁸ 1836-1912; a preacher.

³⁹ 1851-1929; a deacon.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 44. Abraham G. Clemmer ⁴⁰ | 1905- |
| 45. Abraham Z. Derstine ⁴¹ | 1912- |
| 46. Abraham D. Clemmer ⁴² | 1914-1917 (3) |
| 47. Hiram D. Clemmer ⁴³ | 1915-1933 (9) |
| 48. Menno B. Souder ⁴⁴ | 1915- |
| 49. Irwin C. Kulp ⁴⁵ | 1926- |
| 50. Vincent K. Bergey ⁴⁶ | 1934- |

The treasurers of the alms book since the beginning have been:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Christian Meyer (Junior) | (1756)-1784 |
| 2. Henrich Rosenberger | 1784-1807 |
| 3. Johannes Berge | 1807-1811 |
| 4. Jacob Fried | 1811-1841 |
| 5. Abraham (M.) Clemmer | 1841-1868 |
| 6. Henrich Hackman | 1868-1881 |
| 7. Abraham (D.) Clemmer | 1881-1913 |
| 8. Jacob A. Fried | 1913-1924 |
| 9. Hiram D. Clemmer | 1924-1932 |
| 10. Irwin C. Kulp | 1932- |

Deacon Kulp is still serving. The first treasurer, Christian Meyer, Junior, seems to have been bishop-deacon.⁴⁷ No such office is known today among the Franconia Mennonites, but it is still in use among the Amish.

Besides those of the Franconia treasurers, in 1841 the accounts of the Rockhill, Lexington, Salford, and Plain deacons were audited. In 1848 the accounts of the Salford, Lexington, and Plain deacons were audited. So it is clear that each congregation in the bishop district had its own alms fund as early as 1841, but how long before is not known. There was no sudden drop in the Franconia congregation alms fund in 1841. There is no reason to say that a common treasury was maintained for Salford, Lexington, Rockhill, Plain, and Franconia until that time. And yet it appears that at one time the alms collections of the several congregations were recorded in the Franconia alms book. As late as 1810 the alms book has notations to the effect that over four pounds had been received at Clemens' (Salford) and between one and two pounds at Samuel Gehman's meeting (Rockhill). And not only were the alms receipts recorded, but the Franconia treasurer at an earlier date actually took charge of the money. On January 27, 1776 the treasurer recorded that he received over ten shillings from Michael Diersten

⁴⁰ 1867- ; a bishop.

⁴¹ 1867- ; a preacher.

⁴² 1834-1918; a deacon.

⁴³ 1857-1933; a deacon.

⁴⁴ 1892- ; a preacher.

⁴⁵ 1883- ; a deacon.

⁴⁶ 1884- ; a deacon.

⁴⁷ Christian Funk calls him "bestaeter Aeltester." Funk seems to use the term *Aelster* for deacons (*Spiegel*, pp. 48, etc.). Bishops are "bestaete Diener" (*ibid.*, pp. 40, 39, 7, 21, etc.).

(the Rockhill deacon). Six months later he received a smaller sum from Johannes Weierman (the Plain deacon). The congregations most frequently mentioned in the accounts of offerings received are Bechtel's, Plain, Clemens', "us," and later Gehman's, or Samuel Gehman's. Evidently Rockhill was first called Bechtel's in honor of Preacher Samuel Bechtel, and later Gehman's in honor of Preacher Samuel Gehman. Franconia has long been considered Bechtel's by local historians so a digression by way of a defense of the above statement is necessary.

On pages 11-14 of his *Spiegel* Funk states that in the spring of 1777 he called together his eight fellow ministers (evidently this included at least the Franconia deacons) and announced that the time for the communion service had again arrived. After a little delay it was agreed that Funk should hold the inquiry meeting at Clemens', Christian Meyer, at the Plain, and Henry Rosenberger, at Bechtel's. The latter two apparently asked unordained men to preside in taking the counsel of the congregations. At any rate Rosenberger, who was at Bechtel's, reported to Funk that the congregation was not at peace with him. Funk pressed Rosenberger until he got the names of two brethren, Isaac Derstein and Samuel Detweiler. These two brethren furnished Funk with a list of those having charges against him. The only ones with whom Funk had any difficulty in making a reconciliation were the wives of Samuel Bechtel and Abraham Gehman. Now Derstine, Detweiler, Bechtel, and Gehman were all members at Rockhill, the latter two being preachers. This positively identifies Bechtel's and Rockhill as one and the same congregation.

Before leaving the Franconia alms book mention should be made of the treasurers for the congregations other than Franconia. In 1841 the treasurer for Rockhill was John Detweiler; for Lexington, Abraham Lapp; for Salford, John Lederach; and for Plain, Huperd Kassel. (The alms book records only the audit, and does not mention each man's congregation). In 1848 Henry Mininger was the Plain treasurer. And on March 19, 1850 John Geil and Jacob Detweiler (Lexington and Rockhill preachers) signed a statement that \$8.66½ had been transferred from John Allebach to Samuel Souder. Allebach had been a Rockhill deacon and was then a preacher; Souder was the new Rockhill deacon. This was the last item which dealt with any other congregation than Franconia. And now this very interesting book must be laid aside to catalog the Franconia officials.

The following ministers are known to have been affiliated with the congregation. Bishop Henry Funk (d. 1760; it is difficult to know what his "home" congregation was). His son, Bishop Christian Funk (1731-1811), was ordained to the ministry in 1756 or 1757, and as bishop in 1769.^{47a} Preacher Jacob Funk (1730-1816) was a nephew of Christian Funk. He signed the alms book audits from the very beginning (1767). In 1774 he moved to Cheltenham township and (according to D. K. Cassel) united with

^{47a} In 1778 he and his followers were excommunicated for their allegiance to the American cause and for refusing to take a stand against the oath of allegiance. The Funkite sect existed only about a generation after his death. See Part V, Chapter I.

the Germantown congregation. Preacher Jacob H. Oberholtzer (d. 1813) began signing the alms book in 1775. His son John C. (1780-1865) was also ordained to the ministry but was silenced; the tradition is, on account of intemperance. He never signed the alms book. Preacher John Bergey (1759-1841) began signing the alms book in 1779. Jacob Gottshall (1769-1845) was ordained to the ministry in 1804, and as bishop in 1813. He was a school teacher. Preacher Henry Nice (1804-1883) was ordained June 15, 1839; he was also a school teacher. Jacob P. Landes (1808-1895) was ordained to the ministry in November, 1847. Josiah S. Clemmer (1827-1905) was ordained to the ministry in November, 1860, and as bishop in December, 1867. Preacher Michael R. Moyer (1836-1912) was ordained June 14, 1883. The present Bishop, A. G. Clemmer (1867-) was ordained to the ministry June 2, 1904, and as bishop November 20, 1913. Preacher A. Z. Derstine (1867-) was ordained July 20, 1911. The first English preacher is Menno B. Souder (1892-), ordained October 22, 1914.

Since in colonial times the preachers in each bishop district seemed to have a "circuit-system," it is difficult to assign some men to a particular congregation. There was, for example, a preacher Jacob Landis in the Franconia circuit in 1773. To which congregation did he belong? And then some historians display a great eagerness to call some men Reverend. There is no evidence to indicate that Deacon Michael Derstine ever preached. Nor is there information which indicates that Henry Rosenberger was a minister. Christian Funk calls him an *Aeltester* (deacon), and further states that both Rosenberger and John Weierman refused to bring water for the 1778 baptisms. That was a deacon's task, and Weierman is known to have been a deacon. Besides, the 1773 catalog of ministers omits both Michael Derstine and Henry Rosenberger.

In the following list an effort has been made to include all the Franconia deacons. Christian Meyer, Junior, (c. 1705-1787) was a bishop-deacon (bestaeter Aeltester), serving as treasurer already in 1756. Henry Rosenberger, Junior, (1725-1809) began signing the alms book in 1770. Deacon Jacob Freed (1768-1847) was ordained May 8, 1810. Deacon Abraham M. Clemmer (1793-1879) was ordained June 15, 1839; he is the father of Elihu, and grandfather of Bishop A. G. Clemmer. Deacon Henry Hackman (1817-1884) was ordained in 1861. Abraham D. Clemmer (1834-1918) was ordained deacon in 1879. Deacon Jacob A. Freed (1851-1929) was ordained October 30, 1884. Hiram D. Clemmer (1857-1933) was ordained deacon October 22, 1914. Irwin C. Kulp (1883-) the present senior-deacon and keeper of the historic alms book was ordained June 17, 1926. The last man ordained deacon at Franconia is Vincent K. Bergey (1884-), ordained January 2, 1934.

This congregation has been more interested in keeping records than some others. A list of janitors and their salaries per year is interesting:

Isaac Freed	1823-1834	\$8.00
Isaac Freed	1835-1857	10.00
Joseph Freed	1858-1860	10.00
Levi Musselman	1861-1862	15.00

Isaac Freed	1863-1864	15.00			
Joseph Freed	1865-1869	15.00	20.00		
Isaac Holdeman	1870-1872	20.00			
John S. Mack	1873-1895	20.00	25.00	30.00	40.00
Joseph B. Wismer	1896-1903	50.00			
Joseph R. Landis	1904-1916	60.00	75.00	100.00	
Isaac R. Landis and Joseph R. Landis	1916-1932	100.00	150.00	200.00	

A list of trustees is also available. In 1817 the trustees were Michael Shoemaker, John Swartley, Abraham Swartley, and Rudolph Moyer. In 1834 they were George Delp, William Nice, and Joseph Swartley. Five years later the trustees were Daniel Landis, Samuel Kline, and Henry Alderfer. The following served since that time, 1839-1860, Henry Alderfer and Daniel Landis. In 1854 Elias Landis was chosen. 1858-1892, Abraham F. Moyer; 1862-1892, Aaron Freed; 1862-1867, Henry K. Godshall; 1867-189-, Isaac C. Godshall; 1892-1893, Tobias G. Swartley; 1893-1895, John S. Mack; 1892-1911, Jonas M. Hagey; 1895-1932, Henry M. Nice; 1895-1923, Henry B. Clemmer; 1911-1927, Isaac L. Gehman; 1923-, Henry F. Rittenhouse; 1928-, Samuel D. Hackman; 1933, Henry N. Goshow.

The expenses of the trustees have greatly increased. In 1823 they spent \$8.10; 1830, \$10.50; 1840, \$23.75; 1860, \$29.39; 1880, \$76.81; 1900, \$107.63; 1920, \$434.88; 1925, \$823.39; 1930, \$1,266.68.

The Mennonites and Schwenkfelders have had friendly relations in America. This may be due to a mutual helpfulness displayed already in Europe⁴⁸ and also in American pioneering. The Franconia Mennonites have been worshiping annually with the Schwenkfelders in the Schwenkfelder meetinghouse west of Elroy in a union Harvest-Home Service. The denominations alternate annually in providing the preacher for the service. There is a tradition that prior to 1833 the Franconia Mennonites used to often worship in the Schwenkfelder meetinghouse on alternate Sundays. But many old men, such as Elihu D. Clemmer, challenge the truth of this tradition. Those who accept it point to the annual Harvest-Home service and say that it was established as a pledge of continued good will when the Mennonites discontinued using the Schwenkfelder meetinghouse in 1833. It may be true, but more evidence is needed to establish this point.

About 1871 or 1872 Preacher Henry Nice, also a school teacher, began a German school in the schoolhouse near the Franconia meetinghouse. The school was held on Saturday afternoons during the period between the closing of the public school in the spring and its opening in the autumn. He taught the children German hymns, reading a chapter in the German New Testament; used A B C Books and German Question Books. At the close of the teaching period the teacher dictated a German prayer which was re-

⁴⁸ Howard Wiegner Kriebel in *The Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania*, Lancaster, Pa., 1904, p. 32, tells of Mennonites caring for the Schwenkfelder group for eleven days at Altona, Germany, supplying the needs of the group who were on their way to America.

peated in concert by the children. Although religious instruction was given, the purpose of the school was to teach the younger generation to read German. Nice was later assisted by Herman Godshall, Henry Musselman, John Mack, and others. The schoolhouse became too small and the German school was moved into the meetinghouse, but still met on Saturday afternoons. Finally (sometime after 1876) the German Saturday school became a German Sunday school, but still met in the afternoons. About 1897 German Sunday-school lesson quarterlies were introduced. About 1904 some English quarterlies came into use. Until 1918 the leaders (who also served as choristers) were appointed by the leaders of the church. Those who served as leaders were Preacher Henry Nice, Henry Musselman, Herman Godshall, Samuel Swartley, Elihu D. Clemmer, Abraham S. Alderfer, Abraham D. Clemmer, John S. Mack, John N. Clemens, and Abraham H. Kratz. About 1918 it was decided to continue the Sunday school throughout the year and to elect the superintendents. Since that time the following superintendents have served: A. B. Clemmer, Jacob R. Loux, A. G. Clemmer, Horace F. Bergey, Samuel F. Hackman, Hiram D. Clemmer, Henry F. Rittenhouse, William D. Roth, William K. Swartley, Clayton K. Gotwals, Laaden M. Clemmer, Samuel D. Hackman, Irwin S. Beidler, Elwood Derstine, Oswin H. Freed, Mahlon M. Moyer, Harvey M. Alderfer, Henry K. Alderfer, Norman L. Kulp.

Isaac L. Gehman served as secretary-treasurer from 1891-1928; Norman L. Kulp 1929-

The Sunday school has used the following hymnbooks and songbooks: *Zions Harfe* (German); *Pennsylvania Choral Harmony* (German); *Sonntag Schul Harmonia* (German and English); *Philharmonia*, 1893; *Gospel Hymns Consolidated*, 1897; *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*, 1906 or 1907; *Life Songs*, 1921; *Church Hymnal*, 1927; *Songs of Faith and Triumph*, 1931.

Church services are held every two weeks on Sunday morning. On those days the Sunday school convenes in the afternoon; on the alternate Sundays, in the forenoon. The congregation still has two German preachers (there are only three in the conference), and has no evening services of any kind. During the last century the congregation has grown in a remarkable manner. But the danger now confronting it is that which comes to every large congregation—simply to move along in the momentum acquired by a large group without using to the full the great resources available for active work.

Chapter XII

TOWAMENCIN

Towamencin Township, Montgomery County

There is perhaps no other congregation in the district comprising the Franconia Conference in connection with which so many historical problems arise as Towamencin.¹ The name Towamencin is an Indian name and was given to the township at the request of the petitioners when the township was created in March, 1728. The Towamencin Creek probably bore the name before the township was named.

Jacob Godshalk, who performed the first bishop activities in the American Mennonite Church, left Germantown and settled in what is now Towamencin township at least as early as 1713. He sold his Germantown land on June 15, 1714. He purchased one hundred twenty-three acres in what is now Towamencin on February 12, 1714. But he was in Towamencin before he received this deed. On June 2, 1713 he was one of those who signed a petition asking for a road to be laid out; this became the Skippack Pike. Jacob's son Godshalk Godshalk purchased an adjoining farm of the same size as his father's and on the same date. Other Mennonite settlers were soon in the community.

Various dates have been given for the erection of the first meetinghouse at Towamencin. Edward Matthews gives 1764. Probably the only evidence he had was that 1764 was the date of the first land grant to the congregation. But the meetinghouse was there before 1764. Bean's *History of Montgomery County* says the first meetinghouse "may have been erected before 1750, and not likely much later." Bean based his conjecture on the early dates of the tombstones, which is no sound basis for a meetinghouse date.

Mr. Henry S. Landes has recently found evidence which indicates that the meetinghouse was erected prior to March 9, 1728. Thirty Towamencin settlers petitioned the Court of Quarter Sessions of Philadelphia County, meeting on that date, for a road. Heading the list of petitioners was Jacob Gaedtschalck. The petitioners state that ". . . having long laboured under several difficulties & hardships & Inconveniences occasioned by the want of a good road laid out and Confirmed to accommodate in going to & from their several habitations, to places of worship, mills & markets. They

¹ See Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, pp. 1084-1088; Edward Matthews, *History of Towamencin Township*, Skippack, Pa., 1897, pp. 4, 45, 46; *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., October, 1934, p. 12, where the 1713 petition for the laying out of the Skippack Pike is printed.

Mr. Curtis Seibert of 5846 Stockton Road, Philadelphia, has prepared a splendid draft of the Jacob Godshalk tracts and the original meetinghouse lands. He kindly presented a copy to John D. Souder.

Milton C. Keeler located a number of family Bibles to get biographical data of deceased Towamencin ministers and deacons.

are now laid under an unavoidable necessity of making application to the Honorable Court, humbly the favor to obtain the Laying Out & Confirmation [of] such a road as may by a proper view & Consideration be thought most convenient for the accommodating of your Petitioners & others, and beginning at or near a Creek by John Jones his house in the upper Part of Gwynedd Township To Turn out of the great road [the old Bethlehem road] through some part of the s'd John Jones his land to Susquehannah road or Line, then six or seven miles along the same, & running partly by the Baptists Meeting house, & Garret Clements Mill, to a branch of Parkeyoming Creek” This road was laid out and confirmed seven years later and has been known at various times as the North Wales road, the Maxatawny road, and the Sumneytown Pike.

But our interest does not center in the road. It centers in the “Baptist Meetinghouse.” There are now Lutheran and Reformed churches along the section of the road where the “Baptist meetinghouse” stood in 1728. But these congregations were not established until more than a century later.² So even apart from the name, the only possible (known) meetinghouse standing in this section in 1728 was the Towamencin Mennonite meetinghouse. And the Mennonites were often called Baptists or Dutch Baptists in the first half century of their life in America. The conclusion seems inescapable that the proposed road was to run “partly by” the Towamencin Mennonite meetinghouse.

On a road petition of June 5, 1749 the “Herman Godshalk burial ground” is so mentioned. The oldest legible tombstone at Towamencin is that of Catherine Oberholtzer, dated 1741. (See photograph, following page 96). Bean’s *History* claims one stone is dated 1733.

Let us summarize the picture before us. Bishop Jacob Godshalk bought a 123-acre tract, parallel to the present Sumneytown Pike, in 1714. Between the Gottshalk tract and the present Pike was a strip of vacant land eleven perches in width not reached by any one’s deed. (Herman Godshalk secured a patent for this tract of 13 acres and 125 perches on May 26, 1755.) Evidently Jacob Godshalk very early set aside a small lot of land for a burying ground and meetinghouse. This lot lay along the Forty-foot Road, about two hundred yards west of the present meetinghouse. The burial ground was already called Herman Godshalk’s in the 1749 Road Petition, though he did not own the tract until his father’s death in 1763. But in 1749 Jacob, the father, was already about seventy-nine years of age; so it was quite natural to think of the active son as the owner.

On December 26, 1760 Bishop Jacob Godshalk willed the tract which included the burial lot and meetinghouse to his son, Herman. On August 27, 1764 Herman conveyed the lot, containing eighty-two perches, to Christian Godshalk, Christian Weaver, William Godshalk, Goshen Schrager, Peter Hendricks, Nicholas Yellis, and Garret Godshalk. Additional land was added to the original purchase in 1798, 1799, 1837, 1844, 1862, 1876, and 1879, making a total of almost five acres (by 1890). The congregation now owns the land fronting on the Sumneytown Pike.

² Bean, *History of Montgomery County*, pp. 1089, 1090.

The first meetinghouse was also used for school purposes. About 1804 a school teacher named George Lukens left some hot ashes in a vessel one evening. During the night the building burned to the ground. There is a tradition that the first building was stone, but it rests on testimony which an old man gave in 1858. He claimed he remembered going to meeting with his father in 1788, and that the stone meetinghouse appeared quite old even then. This cannot be considered sufficient testimony to establish the point.

In 1805 a stone structure was built about twenty yards east of the first building. A schoolhouse was also erected. (The township adopted public schools about 1850.) In 1862 the third meetinghouse was erected along the Sumneytown Pike. Bean gives the dimensions of the 1805 meetinghouse as "about twenty-four by twenty-eight feet," yet seems ignorant of the fact that a new meetinghouse was erected in 1862. It is impossible to ascertain, therefore, whether these dimensions are of the 1805 or the 1862 meetinghouse. The present meetinghouse, fifty by seventy-four feet in size, was erected of stone in 1925 at a cost of \$13,220.69.

Since the first meetinghouse appears to have been erected on land owned by Bishop Jacob Godshalk, and since it is definitely known that Godshalk also set aside a burial lot which became the church cemetery, it would seem appropriate to name the congregation Godshalk's! But this was not done and another congregation (Schwenksville) later received the name, "Gottshall's." The natural conclusion remains, though, that at first Bishop Jacob Godshalk of the Skippack circuit was the stated official of the meeting. Godshalk must have been a vigorous man physically. He signed the alms book at Skippack as late as 1757, when he was about eighty-seven years old. Of course it is not known how early there were regular preaching appointments in the little meetinghouse on Bishop Godshalk's farm. Naturally we think of him as having charge of the services when they were conducted.

The first preacher definitely ordained for the Towamencin congregation was Christian Allebach, ordained in 1876. Who preached at Towamencin from the time of Godshalk's death (1763) until 1876? One would think that facts as recent as 1876 would be easy to determine, but it has not proved to be easy.

Today Towamencin is in the Franconia bishop district. The congregations now in this bishop district are Franconia, Salford, Plain, Rockhill, Lexington, Towamencin, Souderton, Swamp, and Springfield. Souderton was added to the group in 1879; and Swamp and Springfield not much over a decade ago. So prior to 1879 there were six in the district. This was true as early as the time of the Revolutionary War. Christian Funk mentions "the six churches" repeatedly. The conclusion seems inescapable that the Towamencin congregation must have been considered a part of the Franconia bishop district as early as 1778.

But who preached there? No one seems to know positively. There are several clues which lead one to believe that the Skippack preachers were at least chiefly responsible for supplying the Towamencin pulpit. The first is that since the first burying ground and meetinghouse were located on Bishop Godshalk's own farm he, a Skippack preacher, must have been responsible for the preaching. That would have established a precedent. Sec-

ond, there is a tradition that the Skippack preachers used to supply the Towamencin pulpit. Third, when the Lexington, Franconia, Salford, Rockhill, and Plain congregations were not observing foot washing, the Skippack congregations and the Towamencin congregation were keeping up the practise.³ And finally there is the evidence left behind by a Henry Boorse. His will set forth in part, ". . . To the Elders of Skippack and Towamensing⁴ Menonist Meeting, the sum of fifty pounds, to be paid to them in one year after my decease, by my executors, and I order said Elders to pay annually 50 shillings to the person that makes fire and cleans the Towamensing Menonist Meeting House, this aforementioned sum shall remain for the said Meeting forever." The will was probated at Norristown, September 24, 1810. It is clear from this will that in 1810 Towamencin was considered a branch of the Skippack congregation.

Summing up the meager evidence available it seems rather well established that the Towamencin meeting was regarded as a part of the Franconia bishop district but the pulpit was supplied by the Skippack preachers.

Before turning to a record of the ordained men it will be interesting to read a description of the people in 1837. John C. Boorse of Kulpsville, Pennsylvania, was a local historian. He wrote an article, from which the following extracts are taken, on September 4, 1905. The description tells us of the simple homemade clothes, their habit of walking, the friendly visits before and after the meeting, the effect of the arrival of the minister in his white-covered wagon (all church leaders were then expected to use white-covered wagons), and that there was little or no conscience against the use of tobacco a century ago.

" . . . The first tract of land, about a half acre, was willed by Jacob Godshalk for a burying ground for the 'Mennonites or Baptists as well as to other denominations to bury their dead' The oldest dates visible on tombstones there are 1733, 1735 and that of Catherine Overholtzer, 1741.

"I remember the second building as far back as 1837. I was then six years old. During the winter school was kept in the adjoining school house there I well remember the religious services there on Sundays. They were held in the morning, once in two weeks. In summer most of the people came to church barefoot. A few old women wore slippers without stockings. None of the men wore coats. All their clothing was home spun and home made. Few rode to Church. Nearly all walked. They came along the roads and in single file on paths across the fields, some coming three miles or more. In each case the entire families always came together. There would be from fifty to one hundred present at the meeting. They arrived

³ Indeed this was a factor in Christian Allebach's decision to transfer his membership to the Towamencin congregation. Bishop Jacob Kulp did not favor a literal observance of foot-washing, and he told Christian Allebach to transfer his membership to Towamencin if he wanted to observe it. He did so, and was soon ordained as their first preacher,—in the last century. This account was related to the author by his son, Alpheus K. Allebach.

⁴ A variant of Towamencin; John C. Boorse labored hard to make this the accepted spelling of the name.

early and waited in the meeting house yard for the minister's arrival. Presently he would drive up in a white covered wagon. He lived about seven miles away. He had charge of three or four congregations, miles apart, and would preach to one or more of them each Sunday. When the minister arrived all would go into the meeting house and the service would be held. After the service all the men would come out into the yard again. The first remark would be, 'Who can strike fire?' Then some one would get a fire from his flint, steel and punk and the men would light their pipes and cigars and smoke and have a general social talk

"The services were all in German. That is so still [1905]. Only on a few occasions are there any English services. The ministers are all chosen from the congregation by lot. They are not educated for the ministry. But after they are chosen as ministers they are expected to study some."⁵

What a help Boorse could have been had he just enumerated some of the preachers whom he could so "well remember!"

In the Franconia Conference the first step in organizing a congregation has been to ordain a deacon. The first known deacon at Towamencin was David G. Allebach (1802-1888), who served about fifty-six years, according to an obituary report.⁶ He must have been ordained about the year 1832. A David G. Allebach signed the Skippack alms book! He seems to be another link binding Towamencin to Skippack. He was succeeded by his son, David H. Allebach (1839-1879), who died before his father. The next deacon was Jacob C. Godshall (1834-1898). Benjamin H. Ruth (1849-1904) was ordained deacon on June 1, 1899. Deacon Henry R. Landis (1858-1925) was ordained May 26, 1904. The present deacon, Enos H. Freed (1862-) was ordained February 2, 1926.

Only four preachers have been ordained specifically for the Towamencin congregation. Christian B. Allebach (1841-1917) was ordained June 29, 1876. Preacher Jacob C. Stover (1835-1919) was ordained November 15, 1888. The present ministers are Isaac C. Kulp (1867-), ordained October 29, 1912; and C. Warren Moyer (1881-), ordained October 23, 1917.

Sunday school was started about 1878 in the schoolhouse adjoining the meetinghouse lot. After some years it was moved into the meetinghouse. It was closed over winter for the first forty years. Since about 1917 the Sunday school has been continued throughout the year. The Sunday-school superintendents at Towamencin since 1889 have been Henry Derstine; Isaac Alderfer; Isaiah Kulp; Horace Nyce (served eighteen years); C. Warren Moyer, Henry R. Landis, and Isaac C. Kulp served part of a year; C. Warren Moyer; U. K. Moyer; S. C. Clemens; H. Y. Ruth, and John Mack.

A Sunday school teachers' meeting meets in private homes. It was started in the spring of 1908. It has been suspended a few times since it

⁵ John C. Boorse, "The Towamensing Mennonite Meeting House," *Historical Sketches. A Collection of Papers Prepared for the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Volume III, Norristown, Pa., 1905, pp. 390, 391.

⁶ *Herald of Truth*, Elkhart, Indiana, August 15, 1888.

began. A sisters' sewing circle was organized in 1936 at the home of Ulysses Moyer.

John C. Boorse reported a church attendance of from fifty to a hundred about a century ago. In 1890 there was a membership of about a hundred fifty. The congregation has grown steadily; it now numbers two hundred twenty.

A list of family names found on the tombstones fifty years ago was given by Bean in his *Montgomery County History*. It includes the following surnames: "Overholtzer, Eisenhart, Boorse, Delp, Stauffer, Drake, Ebert, Cassel, Ruth, Frey, Kulp, Vanfussen, Hughes, Keaton, Stover, Detweiler, Mitchell, Rinewalt, Hendricks, Blackburn, Hechler, Metz, Neisz, Rosenberger, Godshalk, Allebach, Frederick, Gehman, Keeler, Moyer, Bernt, Schlossen, Bookhamer, Boyer, Hallman, Kratz, Swartz, Kepler, Zeigler, Keyser, Clemmer, Nice, Klein, Snare, Hunsicker, Eaton, Freed, Nuss, Funk and Roop." This is probably not exhaustive.

On October 4, 1777 Washington and the American army attacked the British at Germantown and were defeated. The American army made a hasty retreat to their camp on the Skippack, one hundred fifty-two Americans having been killed. Of these General Francis Nash, Colonel Boyd, Major White and Lieutenant Smith were buried on Sunday, October 5, 1777 in the Towamencin cemetery. General Washington and the chieftains of the American army attended the burial services which included the firing of a musket volley and a cannon. In 1844 a monument was erected in the cemetery in honor of General Nash. In 1936 an effort was made to remove his body to Nashville, Tennessee, which city was named in his honor, but the Mennonite trustees would not give their permission for his removal. The proposed action was considerably discussed in the local press; John D. Souder writing against the proposal. Finally another monument was erected for General Nash, and his body still rests in the cemetery of the "Baptist Meeting house" along the Sumneytown Pike.

The only early lists of trustees available are those to whom deeds were given. The 1764 names were given earlier in the chapter. In 1798 the trustees were Abraham Gotwals and John Boorse, Junior. The next year they were Joseph Hendricks and William Gottshalk. In 1837 the deed was granted to Joseph Hendricks, John Boorse, Senior, Daniel Boorse, Abraham Gottshall, Peter Metz, and David Allebach. In 1844 Joseph Hendricks dropped out and Henry Boorse appeared. In 1862 the trustees were Peter Metz, Henry C. Boorse, David G. Allebach, Abraham M. Nice, Christian Souder, and Jonas K. Moyer.⁷ They were followed in time by Jacob Godshalk, Henry G. Metz, Henry Bergey, John G. Metz, Jacob Moyer, Benjamin Ruth, Jesse H. Keeler, Henry R. Landis, Isaac C. Kulp, and Howard K. Cassel. The present trustees are Frank K. Moyer, Henry Moyer, Daniel L. Johnson, Milton K. Cassel, and Irvin K. Moyer.

On the pulpit of the Towamencin Mennonite meetinghouse lies a 1776 *Saur* Bible, without inscriptions. There it has lain for a century and a half, not a relic, but a treasure.

⁷ Daniel K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, Pa., 1890, p. 97.

Chapter XIII

ROCKHILL

Formerly BECHTELS' and GEHMANS'¹

West Rockhill Township, Bucks County

On May 31, 1735 James Robinson sold two hundred seventeen and one-half acres of land to Jacob Kolb of Skippack. This tract probably covered in whole or in part the farms on which William A. Derstine, Warren A., and Irvin A. Derstine, Andrew G. Derstine, Mahlon A. and Norman A. Detweiler, and Edgar O. Brunner now live. On January 18, 1736/7 (this means 1737) Jacob and Sarah Kolb conveyed the tract to Michael "Dearstine." Michael Derstine became the first deacon of the Rockhill church. He was a son-in-law of Jacob Kolb and probably rented the farm from his father-in-law before he purchased it.

On January 14, 1730/1 (1731) Jacob Kolb of Skippack bought three hundred fifty acres of land from Andrew and Ann Hamilton for five shillings. On January 19 and 20, 1736/7 (1737) ". . . Jacob Kolb of the Township of Skipack & Parkyomoni (alias Bebbers) . . . & Sarah his wife . . ." conveyed one hundred fifty acres of this tract to ". . . Isaac Kolb of ffree-Town in the County of Bucks, Son of the S^d Jacob Kolb . . ." for a consideration of ninety pounds. Witnesses on the deed of release (January 20, 1737) were Michael Ziegler, Jacob Greder and Robert Jones. Ziegler and Greder were or became Mennonite preachers at Skippack and Jones likely wrote the deed.

Isaac Kolb was ordained to the ministry in 1744 and ordained bishop in 1761. On January 16, 1764 Isaac Kolb and Gertrud (Ziegler, daughter of Michael) his wife conveyed this one hundred fifty acres of land for a consideration of nine hundred pounds to ". . . Samuel Bechtel of Sacconium in the County of Northampton . . ." Kolb later moved to Gwynedd township and in 1773 when he joined in writing the important letter to Holland he evidently considered Plain his congregation. He wrote a fine signature.

Samuel Bechtel was also a Mennonite preacher. (The farm on which Kolb, and later Bechtel, lived is now owned by Samuel and Clinton Landis, and it also included at least part of the present farms of the Antonio Venezia estate and Jonas M. Detweiler). On March 16, 1773 ". . . in the thirteenth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third by the grace of God King of Great Britain . . ." Samuel Bechtel and his wife Mary of Rockhill township for a consideration of three pounds granted a tract of land to Michael Derstine and Abraham Gehman, "elders and trus-

¹ The historian of the congregation, John D. Souder, also president of the Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, has gathered more data of the Rockhill church than can here be published.

tees, . . . Containing one half of an acre of Land With a Meeting house of public Worship and Burying place thereon Erected . . . The deed specifies that the land was granted to " . . . Michael Dirstine and Abraham Gehman their Heirs and Successors Being Elders of the said Mennonite² Congregation or Society in the Township of Rockhill"

Let us summarize the picture before us. By 1737 Michael Derstine was living on the present farm of Derstine Brothers and Isaac Kolb was living on the present farm of Landis Brothers. Kolb was ordained preacher in 1744 and Derstine became the first deacon. Sometime between 1737 and 1773 a meetinghouse and school was erected on Kolb's (or Bechtel's) land near the boundary line between Kolb (or Bechtel) and Derstine. The date of the erection of this first house of worship is not known. It is known that Kolb was ordained preacher in 1744, and when the first audit was made in the Franconia alms book in 1767 Michael "Dierstein" signed it; he must have been already ordained. On March 1, 1773 Bishops Ziegler, Kolb, and Funk mention the "Rakkil" congregation. And as the first deed recites, the building was already standing when the land was granted. The Rockhill congregation is apparently almost two hundred years old.

In 1776 a plank addition was built to the first structure. Folding doors separated the meeting auditorium in the plank addition from the schoolroom of the original log building. This building with separate rooms for school and church purposes stood until 1838. It was located near the northern corner of the present cemetery. In 1838 the 1776 addition was torn down and its timbers were used in the construction of a new meetinghouse. The 1838 building was erected of stone, forty by fifty-three feet, with a slate roof, and a seating capacity of over three hundred. The building committee consisted of Jacob Derstine, Samuel Horning, Senior, and John Moyer. The main sermon of the opening service was preached by John Andrew Strassburger of Rockhill township, a Reformed minister. On one of the timbers of the 1838 building, evidently taken from the 1776 addition, the date, 1776, was cut.

In the meanwhile the original meetinghouse continued to be used for a community school. Among the teachers were Preachers Abraham and Samuel Gehman. About 1852 a schoolhouse was erected along the road leading from Telford to Sellersville, opposite the end of the present land of the Veneziale family. Preacher Abel Horning taught in this school.³ Prior to about 1888 the children of Telford attended this school at the end of what is now "Tony's" lane. In 1888 Beihn's school was erected, and Telford had its own school in the village. The 1852 school was then converted into a dwelling. When the original meetinghouse was abandoned as a school in 1852 it was moved to the farm of Preacher Jacob Detweiler and used as a shed, and later even as a pig stable! In 1924 the present owner, Harry

² The oldest document which the author examined which used the term Mennonite.

³ At that time there was no village of Telford. As late as 1857 there was but one house in what is now the heart of the town. By 1865 the village had a population of seventy-three. In 1875 the town consisted of eighty-seven dwellings with a population of four hundred twenty-one. Davis, *History of Bucks County*, p. 33.

Moser, tore down the building and used it for fire wood. He said, "It was hard as bone, but burned like punk."

Besides "Bechtels" and "Gehmans'" the Rockhill congregation seems to have had at least one other name! In 1842 Jacob Detweiler (1764-1846), father of Preacher Jacob Detweiler, devised \$13.33 ". . . to the trustees of the Menoniest Meeting house known by the name of Beem meeding house" Evidently Detweiler meant Bean's. Jacob Bean was a trustee in 1827. The Bean family lived at the present residence of Edgar O. Brunner. Beihn's schoolhouse, built in 1888, was abandoned in 1931, when the township erected a consolidated school along the Ridge Road. Bean's school was converted into a dwelling by Peter Moyer in 1936.

By 1925 the congregation had outgrown the 1838 meetinghouse, and they decided to build a new one. The building committee consisted of William A. Derstine, chairman; Warren A. Derstine; John D. Souder; James B. Derstine; Samuel Alderfer; John Allebach; Harvey A. Souder; Samuel D. Landis and Jonas M. Detweiler. Irvin A. Derstine was treasurer. The three trustees and the three ordained men were also advisers. Thus about sixteen men were involved in making the building plans. The last services were held in the old stone meetinghouse which stood parallel with the railroad at the northeast end of the cemetery on Easter Sunday, April 12, 1925. About two hundred eighteen were served with the bread and wine of the communion service. Bishops Mininger and Clemmer preached. In the afternoon the Sunday school held its last service in the old meetinghouse. One hundred seventy-one were present. Among those who gave addresses were the superintendent, William A. Derstine, and Preacher Edwin A. Souder. It was in this 1838 meetinghouse that the author was baptized by Bishop Clemmer on May 11, 1924.

The old building was soon torn down. Jonas M. Detweiler donated the land for the new site. The stones of the old building were used for the foundation of the new one. The 1925 meetinghouse, fifty-four by ninety feet, built of brick, cost \$28,928.47. It has a basement, cloak rooms at the northeast end and Sunday-school rooms which are separated from the auditorium by rolling doors, at the opposite end. The basement has running water and lavatories. The Rockhill meetinghouse is one of the best-built meetinghouses of the conference. Opening services were held January 17, 1926. The chief speakers were Noah Souder of New Holland, A. G. Clemmer, Jonas Mininger, and I. Frank Swartz.

Since Isaac Kolb (1711-1776) was ordained to the ministry in 1744 he was probably the first preacher of the Rockhill meeting, unless there was no Rockhill meeting prior to 1764. Samuel Bechtel (d. 1802) moved from Lehigh county to the Kolb farm in 1764 and preached at Rockhill until his death. He is said to have been a preacher as early as 1750. Rockhill was sometimes called Bechtels' in honor of Preacher Samuel. (See the Franconia chapter, Chapter XI, page 144). Bechtel was succeeded by his son-in-law, Abraham Gehman (d. 1792) who began signing the Franconia alms book in 1770. Gehman died before Bechtel. The next preacher was Abraham Gehman's son, Samuel (1767-1845), who began signing the alms

book in 1799. D. K. Cassel states that Samuel Gehman was ordained in 1798. The Franconia alms book often refers to "Samuel Gehman's meetinghouse." Rockhill was usually called Gehmans' until about a generation ago. George Derstine (1770-1837) served as a preacher at Rockhill for about twenty-five years.⁴ In 1840 Jacob Detweiler (1795-1879) was ordained but in three years asked for help. Abraham Fretz (1793-1875) was then ordained in 1843. The next preacher was John Allebach (1805-1902) who served as deacon two years. Allebach was likely ordained deacon after John Detweiler left the church in the division of 1847. Then in 1849 Allebach was called to the ministry. Thus in 1889 he would have been in his forty-third year of service as an ordained man. D. K. Cassel thought he was then a preacher for that period of time. But the document found among the Mensch papers⁵ states that Allebach was ordained deacon after the division. Abel Horning (1825-1906) was ordained to the ministry on November 5, 1863. Preacher Mahlon D. Souder (1859-1924) was ordained on May 31, 1899. Samuel D. Detweiler (1841-1917) was ordained to the ministry in the spring of 1876 and was ordained bishop October 29, 1896. The first English preacher at Rockhill was William M. Landis (1869-1923) who was ordained November 2, 1909; he was a grandson of Preacher George Landis of Flatland. His successor was Alfred A. Detweiler (1897-), great-grandson of Preacher Jacob Detweiler (1795-1879), ordained to the ministry on August 7, 1923.⁶ Mahlon D. Souder was succeeded by his son, Edwin A. Souder (1882-), ordained July 22, 1924.⁷ On September 4, 1934 Isaac F. Detweiler (1876-) was ordained to the ministry. All the Rockhill preachers who have died have legible markers in the Rockhill cemetery, except Bishop Isaac Kolb.

The first deacon at Rockhill was Michael Derstine (1712-1777). The date of his ordination is not known but he signed the first audit in the Franconia alms book in 1767. If the date of Isaac Kolb's ordination coincides with the organization of a Mennonite meeting in Rockhill township, Derstine may have been ordained at the same time. But there is no known documentary support for this conjecture. Some Derstine manuscripts are preserved in a private home in Washington, D. C., but unfortunately they were not accessible. Michael was evidently succeeded by his son, Isaac Derstine (1744-1799), who signed the Franconia alms book only once, in 1784. But who was his successor? Historians usually name John F. Detweiler (1786-1864). But obviously he could not have succeeded Isaac Derstine who died in 1799. But Isaac Derstine had a son Isaac Derstine (1774-1821). A deed of 1814 was granted to (Preacher) ". . . George Derstine and Isaac Derstine Elders and Trustees of the Mennonite Congregation in the township of Rockhill. . . ." Might Isaac, Junior, also have been a deacon? No one seems to know. John F. Detweiler (1786-1864)

⁴ D. K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, p. 105.

⁵ This document is reproduced in Chapter XV, pp. 167, 168.

⁶ He failed financially and on November 27, 1930 was declared inactive ministerially.

⁷ He also failed financially and was declared inactive ministerially on January 22, 1933.

is the Rockhill deacon who went with Oberholtzer in 1847 but who later returned. He was also a grantee in deeds of 1827 and 1830. John Allebach (1805-1902) was evidently ordained to take his place in 1847 but two years later was ordained to the ministry. Samuel Souder (1811-1866) was ordained deacon in 1849 to succeed Allebach. John F. Detweiler (II) was a son-in-law of the earlier deacon of the same name. He was born in 1807, succeeded his father-in-law and Samuel Souder as deacon, and died in 1880. Deacon Joseph B. Allebach (1844-1923), son of Preacher John (1805-1902), was ordained in the fall of 1880 to succeed John F. Detweiler (II). The present deacon is the third deacon of that name, John F. Detweiler (1867-), son of Bishop Samuel (1841-1917). He was ordained May 23, 1916. He is a brother to the present pastor, Isaac F. Detweiler.

The Rockhill church has ten deeds. As is usual in the Franconia Conference they are in the possession of the senior trustee (Levi B. Freed). They are valuable as furnishing names of trustees and officials. The first one was already noted. On May 29, 1814 Samuel Gehman and his wife, Mary, granted, for three dollars, thirty perches of land to George Dirstine and Isaac Dirstine, "Elders and Trustees." This deed mentions the old stone wall around the cemetery. On June 9, 1827 (this date appears to have been altered; later deeds refer to this grant as of April 19) "Samuel Gayman Senior D D of Divinity" and Mary his wife for a consideration of nine dollars granted one hundred forty perches to John Detweiler and Jacob Bean, "elders and trustees of the Mennonists Congregation. . . ." On March 1, 1830 Samuel Gehman, Junior and his wife, Mary, granted one acre and seventeen perches for \$4.25 to John Detweiler and Jacob Derstine, ". . . elders and trustees. . . ." On August 9, 1834 George Derstine was paid forty dollars for one hundred five perches of land by John Detweiler and Jacob Derstine, elders and trustees. Henry and Esther Derstine received one hundred dollars for one acre of land on April 3, 1854 from "Samuel Landis one of the trustees of Geyman's Menonite meeting house and Burying-ground." On December 2, 1870 John M. and Catherine Yoder, who lived on the farm now owned by the Antonio Veneziale estate, conveyed twenty-seven perches for twenty-five dollars to Samuel Landis, a trustee. On September 20, 1883 Samuel K. and Mary Detweiler, of the present J. M. Detweiler farm, sold fifty-eight perches of land to Joseph Horning, Jacob Detweiler and Noah Derstine, trustees, for one dollar. On April 20, 1894 Henry N. and Catharine Souder conveyed two acres and one hundred thirty-six perches of land to Samuel S. Horning, Noah G. Derstine, and Jacob C. Detweiler, trustees, for \$296.40. The present site of the meetinghouse was granted on May 2, 1925 by Jonas M. and Clara A. Detweiler to the present trustees, Levi B. Freed, Andrew G. Derstine and Mahlon D. Detweiler, for one dollar. The tract consists of one acre and twenty-three and four-tenths perches. The church now owns about eight acres and one hundred thirty-six perches.

Mennonites of Rockhill township evidently first buried on the little burial acre on Michael Derstine's hillside. This lot is now owned by the Reading railroad and adjoins the land of Andrew G. Derstine. According to tra-

dition when the enclosure was being erected around the first burial acre adjoining the meetinghouse Jacob Derstine remarked that he would like to know whose the first interment would be. It was himself. He died February 25, 1772. The most numerous surnames in the Rockhill cemetery are Allebach, Alderfer, Appenzeller, Bach, Bishop, Bechtel, Bergey, Bean, Benner, Clemmer, Clymer, Cassel, Delp, Derstine, Detweiler, Frederick, Freed, Fretz, Fellman, Frankenfield, Groff, Godshall, Gehman, Geisinger, Hunsberger, Hartzell, Halteman, Harr, Horning, Kulp, Keller, Kooker, Krupp, Kratz, Kinsey, Leister, Landis, Musselman, Moyer, Nase, Oberholtzer, Ott, Rickert, Rosenberger, Roth, Ruth, Souder, Swartzlander, Slotter, Stover, Swartley, Stoll, Shelly, Stauffer, Swartz, Wiegner, Weidemoyer, Woodward, Yocum, Yoder, and Ziegler. There are about a thousand marked graves in the cemetery.

In 1875 one Samuel Landes of the Rockhill church died without issue. In his will he bequeathed \$1,500.00 "to the trustees of the Congregation of Mennonites at Gehman's Meeting House" to be invested in good securities until the interest was sufficient to erect a house on the church land for a sexton's dwelling. (He also bequeathed his horseshed at the said meetinghouse to the said congregation to have and to hold the bequest forever!) The sexton's house was built in 1883 at a cost of \$1,412.74. The first sexton to occupy the new house was Jacob Stoll, who served until his death in 1913. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, Irwin Y. Detweiler. Irwin Y. was succeeded by his brother, Elmer Y. Detweiler, who served until 1923. A. Martin Wenger served from 1923 until 1926. Since 1926 Raymond D. Kulp has been sexton. Sextons prior to 1883 were Henry Derstine and John Yoder.

The graveyard was not kept in good condition until 1929 when the ordained men and the trustees nominated, and the congregation approved, a cemetery committee of three men. These men at once organized as follows, John D. Souder, president; Harvey A. Souder, secretary; and James B. Derstine, treasurer. The cemetery was then graded, the footstones removed, and the grass of the whole cemetery has since been regularly mowed. The trustees gave the committee a fund of \$400.00 at the outset. By April 1, 1930 the trust fund amounted to \$570; 1931, \$1,592; 1932, \$2,192; 1933, \$2,427; 1934, \$2,477; 1935, \$3,364; 1936, \$3,454.87.

The present driveway in the cemetery was built in 1936 with part of a three-hundred-dollar bequest to the congregation by Romanus G. Alderfer.

As is customary in the Franconia Conference, church services are held every two weeks in the morning. In May, 1915 the electric fixtures of the old Souderton meetinghouse were installed and evening services have since been held regularly every four weeks. In 1915 the old posts in the auditorium were also removed and the ceiling supported by frame work in the attic.

The first English preacher, William M. Landis, was ordained in 1909 and the last German preacher, Mahlon D. Souder, died in 1924. One German hymn is still sung every two weeks in the morning. Years ago the

Zions Harfe was the standard hymnal. This was replaced by *Hymns and Tunes* and the latter was displaced by the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*, which is still in use.

Many years ago the Rockhill chorister was Samuel Gehman; later Henry Hunsberger served. He was followed by Enos Gehman, David Roth, and Noah G. Derstine. The present church choristers are James B. Derstine and Jonas M. Detweiler.

In the division of 1847 the deacon of the congregation, John F. Detweiler, (I) was one of the organizers of Oberholtzer's Conference. A small group of the seceders worshiped at Rockhill on alternate Sundays for a little over forty years. Detweiler returned to the old church after a few years. But there was evidently some concern on the part of the Rockhill Mennonites after the division lest the seceders lay claim to the property. The congregation held an election of trustees on June 6, 1848. Minutes of the meeting were written and the paper carried by Preachers Detweiler and Fretz to a Justice of the Peace who had the document recorded at Doylestown in *Miscellaneous Book*, 10-383. A charter of nine articles was framed, evidently in 1850, for it provided for the election of seven new trustees on the first Monday in January, 1851. Members of the "Society" who signed were Isaac Benner, John Berge, John Slauter, John H. Dirstine, Samuel Detweiler, and Henry Sauder. The trustees were Jacob Dirstine, Samuel Landes, Samuel Sauder, John M. Detweiler, Henrich Detweiler, Joseph Horning, and Jacob Rosenberger. Perhaps their fears subsided after some years for later the number of trustees dropped to three and no annual election was held. The trustees now serve for life.

Sunday school was first held at various schoolhouses such as Branch Valley. The author examined a record book of the Branch Valley Union Sunday School for the years 1878 and 1882. It appears that the first Rockhill Mennonite Sunday School was held in the meetinghouse each summer from 1879 to 1881. Abraham Swartz was superintendent. Swartz was a school teacher and the father of Preacher I. Frank Swartz of Blooming Glen. In 1882 the Rockhill school was not reopened, but the Branch Valley school resumed life. Swartz was the assistant superintendent in 1882 at Branch Valley. The superintendent was James Patton a Presbyterian (?). About 1884 a Sunday school was again organized at Rockhill and on a more exclusively Mennonite basis. But again about 1890 it was discontinued for a year or two, through which action several young people united with churches which offered them Sunday-school privileges. It was perhaps during this interval that a Sunday school was conducted in Bean's schoolhouse. Finally in 1901 the Rockhill Mennonite Sunday School began to operate throughout the year. Quarterlies were adopted about 1900.

No one has kept a list of Sunday-school officers. A number of men served at different times. The following list is not intended to be chronological; but among those who served as superintendent are Abraham Swartz, Mahlon D. Souder, Henry Smith, John D. Souder, John M. Overholt, Isaac F. Detweiler, Clayton H. Detweiler, Jonas M. Detweiler, William A. Derstine, Jacob A. Detweiler, A. Lincoln Gehman, Harvey A. Souder, Preston S. Alderfer, Samuel D. Landis, Stanley A. Derstine, and

John C. Wenger. Besides the church choristers the following men have assisted regularly or occasionally: Clayton H. Detweiler, Alfred A. Detweiler, A. Martin Wenger, Irvin G. Gehman, Samuel R. Detweiler, and John C. Wenger. The following songbooks were used in the Sunday school in addition to the church hymnals, *Pennsylvania Choral Harmony* (bilingual), *Evangeliums-Lieder*, *The Gospel Call*, *Life Songs*, and *Tabernacle Hymns Number Three*.

About 1897 or 1898 a Sunday-school teachers' meeting was organized. It met in private homes. One of the promoters was Daniel J. Lapp of Nebraska who spent a few months here in 1897. Among those active in organization were Deacon Joseph Allebach, David F. Detweiler, Mahlon D. Souder, and Henry Smith. There was some opposition; David Detweiler moved to Virginia; and within a decade the teachers' meeting had died and has never been revived.

On February 23, 1919 a sewing circle was organized at the home of Preacher Mahlon D. Souder. William M. Moyer was temporary chairman and John D. Souder served as secretary. The group adopted the name, Rockhill Willing Workers. The proposed meeting had been announced at the Rockhill Sunday School the previous Sunday. About thirty-five men and women were present. The president, Mrs. J. M. Detweiler; the assistant, Mrs. Hannah Clymer; and the secretary, Mrs. Harry A. Derstine, have served ever since the beginning. The first treasurer was Mrs. Howard A. Detweiler. She was succeeded in 1923 by Eva Souder. Since Eva Souder Bergey's death, Mrs. Wallace A. Souder is treasurer. From 1919 until March, 1923 the circle met at the home of Mrs. M. D. Detweiler. Since April 17, 1923 the meetings are held in the Eastern Mennonite Home, Souderton. The group meets the third Tuesday of each month. In 1935 thirteen meetings were held, with an average attendance of twenty-three. 281 garments, 19 quilts and 10 comforters were made. Receipts amounted to \$240.82 and the expenditures totaled \$216.05. Ten or twenty dollars is sent annually to South American Mennonite missions. The group is carrying on a splendid work.

At the present time the deacon's expenditures are small. But from about 1924 to 1929 his accounts ran as high as a thousand dollars per year. The trustees' annual statement for the fiscal year ending April 13, 1936 showed total expenditures of \$359.27. Sunday-school expenses amount to about \$140 per year. The supplying of *Words of Cheer*, *Youth's Christian Companion*, and *Beams of Light* in the Sunday school is taken care of by individuals of a missionary spirit. Quarterly missionary offerings have been lifted for about the last two years. In 1935 they totaled \$160.58. Since January, 1934 the Sunday-school class taught by A. Martin Wenger has a hundred dollar (annual) share in the Educational Work of the India Mennonite Mission. Special offerings are also occasionally lifted. For example the congregation gave \$114 toward the relief of the Johnstown, Pa., flood-sufferers in March, 1936.

Combined evangelistic and Bible instruction meetings were first held at Rockhill within the last decade.

Among those who have gone out from the congregation into church work elsewhere are J. D. Mininger⁸ and R. W. Benner. Rhine W. Benner was born near Souderton on November 7, 1889. As a young man he accepted Christ and was baptized at Rockhill. On June 4, 1911 he married Anna Stout; seven children have come into their home. He has done mission work in Altoona, Pennsylvania; Job, and Roaring, West Virginia; and has worked in the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. He was ordained to the ministry May 16, 1916 at the Lindale Church, near Linville, Virginia. On September 18, 1918 he was fined a thousand dollars and costs for violating the Espionage law in advising the members of his congregation not to buy war saving stamps which advice he gave at the suggestion of Bishop L. J. Heatwole. Bishop Heatwole received the same fine. These brethren were simply attempting to take a stand consistent with nonresistance. Brother Benner is at present located at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

⁸ J. D. Mininger was baptized at Souderton so his biography is found in Part II, Chapter XVI, p. 176.

Chapter XIV

PLAIN or PLAINS

Hatfield Township, Montgomery County

At the present time the congregation is called the Plain church. But Edward Matthews and other historians used to refer to the church as the Plains—so named because of the nature of the land on which it stands. The meetinghouse is situated a short distance northwest of Lansdale.

The donor of the lot of land upon which the first school and meetinghouse was built was Henry Frey.¹ He gave the land between 1760 and 1769. But he gave no deed to the trustees of the church. When he sold his farm on May 27, 1769 he surveyed out a lot of land which comprises part of the present cemetery.^{1a} The 1773 letter mentions the "Blen" congregation. The first building was built of logs within the present limits of the cemetery, and was in use until 1813. In the latter year a stone meetinghouse, about thirty by forty-five feet in size, was erected.

Preacher J. C. Clemens has a record book in his possession which dates back to 1813. The writing is partly in German script and partly in English. A meeting of the Plain congregation, this book states, was held on Saturday, September 5, 1812. After discussion it was decided to erect a new stone meetinghouse on the site of the old meetinghouse. The building committee was composed of Joseph Oberholtzer, Jacob Oberholtzer, and John Kindig. Abraham Cassel and Dilman Kolb were appointed a committee to raise funds. The book contains a list of the names of those who subscribed money for the new building. The list contains 108 names, mostly men.

On Monday, November 8, 1813 a meeting of the building committee was held. It was found that the total cost of the new meetinghouse was \$814.86. \$733.25 had been subscribed, leaving a deficit in the building costs of \$81.61. Further, the stove and pipe cost \$18.50. Some of the expenses were as follows: "boards at the river," \$55.38; lime, \$31.78; shingles, \$130.62½; shutter hinges, \$16.31; window glass, \$18.27; carpenter work \$169.16; mason work, \$76 (for a number of men their specific work is not mentioned, perhaps a number of these were also masons).

In 1867 a third building, also built of stone, was erected on about the same location as the present building. The 1867 structure measured forty by fifty feet. In 1922 the present meetinghouse, fifty by seventy-six feet in size, was erected at a cost of about \$11,000.00.

¹ The historian of the congregation, David K. Allebach, kindly submitted much of the data of this chapter.

^{1a} The deed for the one hundred thirty-two acres of his farm, exclusive of the land donated to the church, is now in the care of the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1851 Jacob Kindig sold a lot of forty perches to John Kindig and Joseph Krupp, trustees of the Plain Mennonite Church. These forty perches were surveyed from the farm once owned by Henry Frey. On July 29, 1867 John Kindig sold three fourths of an acre from the same farm to John H. Kulp, Jacob K. Rittenhouse, and Elias Nice, trustees. On May 27, 1873 the trustees purchased an additional eight perches of land.

Prior to the Revolutionary War the circuit system was in use. The 1773 letter groups the preachers of five congregations together into one list—Franconia, Plain, Salford, Rockhill, and "Schwamin" (Lexington?). Bishop Isaac Kolb (1711-1776) evidently considered Plain his "home" congregation after 1764 when he seems to have moved to Gwynedd township, south of Lansdale. He was ordained to the ministry in 1744 and ordained bishop in 1761.

The first minister definitely known to have been ordained for the Plain church was John Krupp (1779-1842), ordained in 1816. Joseph Cassel (1799-1868) was his successor. Jacob Kulp (1798-1875) was ordained to the ministry August 2, 1838 and ordained bishop December 21, 1843. Jacob C. Loux (1822-1895) was ordained to the ministry May 21, 1867. Preacher Henry Godshall (1834-1908) was ordained in 1874 and deposed from his office in November, 1905. The present bishop, Jonas Mininger (1852-) was ordained preacher May 30, 1895 and bishop October 24, 1905. Preacher J. C. Clemens (1874-) was ordained November 14, 1906. John E. Lapp (1905-) was ordained to the ministry June 22, 1933.

One of the deacons mentioned by Christian Funk² was John Weierman. He signed the audits in the Franconia alms book from 1779 to 1784. It is traditional that he was deacon of the Plain church. He seems to have been still serving in 1806. The next known Plain deacon was Hubert Cassel (1775-1847). His successor was Henry Mininger (1817-1885), ordained in 1847. Deacon Abraham H. Kulp (1841-1901) was ordained during the summer of 1883. David M. Cassel (1839-1922) was ordained deacon November 21, 1901. The present deacon, Abram A. Wambold (1883-) was ordained November 1, 1917.

The trustees serving in 1851 were John Kindig and Joseph Krupp. In 1867 John H. Kulp, Jacob K. Rittenhouse and Elias Nice were the trustees. Kulp died in 1895 and David A. Moyer was elected in his place. Elias Nice died in 1899 and Abram Alderfer succeeded him. Jacob K. Rittenhouse resigned in 1910 and Jacob C. Rittenhouse was elected in his place. David A. Moyer died in 1923 and William Rosenberger was elected to succeed him.

The sextons of the meetinghouse have been Philip R. Swartley, Henry O. Godshall, Jacob K. Rittenhouse, Jacob C. Rittenhouse, Charles R. Hendricks and again, Jacob C. Rittenhouse.

Jacob Kulp served as chorister of the congregation until he was ordained to the ministry. A later chorister was Joseph Krupp. Jacob Clem-

² *Spiegel Fuer Alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1813, p. 53.

mer became Sunday-school chorister in 1888 and church chorister in 1893. David K. Allebach became Sunday-school chorister in 1890 and church chorister in 1898. Abram C. Rittenhouse became Sunday-school chorister in 1904 and church chorister in 1905. More recent choristers are Curtis Z. Rittenhouse and Ernest R. Clemens.

A Sunday school was organized in the spring of 1888 and continued each summer for three years. In 1893 the work was started a second time and continued every year since that time except in 1903. Since 1913 the Sunday school meets every Sunday throughout the year. The following men have served as superintendents and assistant superintendents, respectively: Preacher Jacob Loux and Jonas Mininger, 1888-1890; Henry Wisler and Joseph Mininger, 1893-1900; Preacher Henry Godshall and Preacher Jonas Mininger, 1900-1902; David K. Allebach and Jacob C. Clemens, 1903; David K. Allebach and John M. Funk, 1904-1906; David K. Allebach and Abram C. Rittenhouse, 1906-1910; Henry Wisler and Abram C. Rittenhouse, 1910; Daniel Leatherman and Abram C. Rittenhouse, 1911-1914; Daniel Leatherman and Henry Hackman, 1914-1924; Abram Delp and Ellis Godshall, 1924-1929; Ellis Godshall and Curtis Rittenhouse, 1929; Curtis Rittenhouse and Daniel Leatherman, 1930; Daniel Leatherman and John E. Lapp, 1931; John E. Lapp and Ellis Godshall, 1932; Ellis Godshall and Abram Delp, 1933; Abram Delp and Marvin Ruth, 1934; Marvin Ruth and Curtis Rittenhouse, 1935; Curtis Rittenhouse and Daniel Leatherman, 1936; Daniel Leatherman and Ernest R. Clemens, 1937.

In the fall of 1923 several individuals had a conviction that a Sunday-school teachers' meeting would be a means of blessing to the church. Henry Hackman presented the matter to Bishop Mininger, suggesting that a teachers' meeting would make for a better Sunday school. The work received his approval and the first meeting was held in the meetinghouse December 29, 1923. Jacob C. Clemens led the meeting until 1932. In that year the Sunday-school superintendents began to share in the work. When John E. Lapp was ordained he also began to take his turn; and since there is a Lansdale Mission Sunday School, its superintendent is also among those who serve as leader.

A sewing circle composed of sisters from the Plain and Lexington churches meets the third Wednesday of each month.³

The first special meeting in the Plain meetinghouse was an all-day mission meeting in 1923. Bible-study meetings were started in 1936.

The first hymnal was the *Ausbund*. Later came the *Zions Harfe*. The latter was in use until 1924. The first English singing was introduced in 1893 when *Hymns and Tunes* began to be used. This book was in use until 1910 when the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* was introduced. One German hymn is still sung at each church service. "Lining" the German hymns was discontinued as a regular practice about 1910.

³ It was organized in 1918 as the Lexington Mennonite Sewing Circle. Since 1928 it is called the "Plain and Line Lexington Mennonite Sewing Circle."

Services are held every two weeks in the forenoon. Sunday school meets every Sunday morning. Since July, 1923 an evening service is held every fourth Sunday.

In the Sunday school the first songbook used was the *Philharmonia*; later the *Gospel Call*, *Life Songs*, and *Tabernacle Hymns Number Three*.

In 1930 the poor fund amounted to \$416.63, and the fund for missions, etc., totaled \$1,041.84.

The membership was about a hundred in 1890; in 1919 it was one hundred seventy. Today it is two hundred fifty.

Chapter XV

LEXINGTON

New Britain Township, Bucks County

Among the papers of the late Jacob B. Mensch of Schippack, now in the possession of Mary Mensch Lederach, Trooper, Pennsylvania, was a list of ordinations and baptisms. It is not known who recorded this data (the present author has filled in the material in parentheses, and added most of the punctuation.) The original was written in German script, evidently from about 1852 to 1855. A "Triebig's" congregation is mentioned in the document. The question is, Where is Triebig's? Here is the document in full:

The preachers who have been chosen since the churches divided (1847, are) namely, George Detweiler of Schippach (Schipack), (Philip R.) Kraut of "Neubritten"; (Isaac) Oberholtzer of "Berkensee" (Blooming Glen); (Jacob) Beidler of Great "Schwamm" (Swamp); (and John B.) Bachtel of Hereford. Jese Beidler has returned (to the Franconia Conference) from the New (Mennonite Conference, organized in 1847). (Others ordained are, Samuel) Gottshall from "Diebrun"; (John) Allebach from Gehmans' (Rockhill). Abraham Wismer of "Schippach" was confirmed (ordained bishop) in 1852; (Isaac) Overholtzer of "berkensee" (Blooming Glen, was) confirmed. (John) Gross from "Diebrun" was chosen minister.

Deacons (Vorsteher) who have been chosen since the churches divided (1847) are, (Abraham) Schantz of Great "Schwamm"; B. (Benjamin) Detweiler of "Solford"; J. (John) Allbach (of Gehmans);¹ H. Minninginger (Henry Mininger) of "Hatfield" (Plain); Johannes Letherach (John Lederach) of Salford has died since (1847); Gabel (?) in Hereford, deacon; Isaac Gottshall (of Doylestown), confirmed minister (bishop) aged 54,² Abraham Meyer of "Diebrun" has died. Isaac Gottshall of "Doylestown" has died, aged 65 4 12 Da.

Since the churches divided Kolb (Bishop Jacob Kulp of Plain) has, as nearly as I know, received into the church,—at "Schippach" baptized 28 and received one (aufgenommen); in "Hatfield" (Plain) baptized 30 and received 3; at "Gehmans" (Rockhill) baptized 17 and received 3; at "Triewigs" meetinghouse baptized 27 and received 2, in 1850; at "Berkensee" (Blooming Glen) baptized 16; at the "Plen" 14 baptized and one received; at Franconia 25 baptized; at "Diebrun" 35 baptized; at Doylestown 16 baptized; in "Schippach" 5 baptized.

¹ These parentheses are in the original manuscript.

² "Isaac Gottschall Bestediger diener ald 54." If the German grammar were corrected would it mean that Isaac Gottshall was ordained bishop at the age of 54? His death is recorded a few phrases later.

In 1852 (the following) were baptized and received into the church, namely, in Franconia 26 baptized; in Towamencin 14 baptized and 2 received; "Schwam" (Swamp) 21 baptized; "Triebigs" 13 baptized; in (Bishop John B.) Latshaw's district (Chester County) 11 baptized; and at "Deeb Run" 12 baptized. Preachers and deacons appointed (angestellt) . . . (Deacon Henry?) Meyer of "Berkensee" (Blooming Glen); Deacon (Samuel H.) Meyer (of Blooming Glen); Preacher (Isaac) Rickert of "Doylestown" in 1853. Baptized in Franconia 12 (?) and 3 received; in "Schippach" 5 baptized; in Vincent 7 baptized; at "Deeb Run" 11 baptized; in "New britten" 9 baptized; at Herford 7 baptized; at "Schwamm" 17 baptized; (a total of) 77 (were) baptized and received.

In 1854, 23 (were) baptized at "Diebrun"; at Doylestown, 12; at Gehman's (Rockhill) 6 (?); at "Plehn" 14.

In 1855, 6 (were baptized at) "Plehn"; 16 at Triebigs; at Towamencin, 13; at Franconia

* * * * *

After Doylestown township had been formed in 1818 the only Mennonite Church in New Britain township was Lexington. Evidently the author of the above notes meant Lexington when he wrote "New britten." But where was "Triebigs?" No such congregation is now known. And judging by the number of baptisms Triebig's was no small church eighty-five years ago. Just south of the village of Line Lexington, almost adjoining it, is a small village in which stands the Trewigtown Hotel. From that point the Lexington meetinghouse and burying ground may be clearly seen. "Trewigs" must have been another name for the Lexington Church.

The first purchase of land by the Lexington Mennonites was made February 17, 1752. Jacob Roar and Christian Schwartz of New Britain township and Henry Shooter and John Rosenberger of Hatfield township bought a lot of land containing about one acre of James McColister, patentee of the Penn heirs, for three pounds (English money).³ On this acre of land the New Britain Mennonites erected a log house of worship. After some years a stone structure was erected in place of the log building and on the same site. This was enlarged to double the seating capacity in 1808.⁴ Sixty years later (1868) this building was also razed and the present stone meetinghouse, forty-five by sixty feet, erected. About thirty years ago the old stoves were removed, a basement dug under a part of the building, a heater installed, ceiling supports removed from the auditorium and a porch added to the east side of the building.

³ Samuel R. Swartley submitted a historical sketch of this congregation which was of great assistance. The deed for the church 1752 property is recorded at Doylestown. *Bk.* 491, page 213.

⁴ William H. W. Davis, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, revised by Warren S. Eby and John W. Jordan, New York, Chicago, 1905, Volume I, pp. 365, 366.

The site of the original log and stone meetinghouses was about the center of the original acre. A cedar tree stood there until 1930. In that year it was removed and an evergreen tree, five feet high, was planted to mark the site of the first meetinghouse.

Three additional lots of land have been purchased. Christian Atherholt sold the church sixty-three perches on April 3, 1817 for \$31.50. The trustees paid Samuel Gehman \$178.75 for one acre and one hundred perches on April 1, 1839. On May 19, 1868 an additional one hundred thirteen perches were bought of William Ruth for \$211.87. The church property now consists of three acres and one hundred sixteen perches of land.

D. K. Cassel gives the date of the incorporation of the church as 1836. Samuel R. Swartley says it was incorporated January 7, 1837.

The accounts of the building of the 1868 meetinghouse have been preserved.

The cost of building this house, including the	
wood-house and outwall (lawn wall)	\$3,044.78
For stoves and pipes	56.84
Coal	15.75
113 perches of land, 100 cedar posts	230.37
Rails, shade trees, labor and expense	122.38
Balance in treasury	530.80

January 4, 1869

\$4,000.92

In 1935 an addition to be used for Sunday-school rooms, was built to the south end of the building. The addition is sixteen by forty-five feet and was built at a cost of about \$2,300.00. The present building would thus measure about forty-five by seventy-six feet.

The first known resident minister was David Ruth. Ruth was a resident for many years in Hatfield township, Montgomery county. In 1801 he moved to New Britain township. He began to sign the Franconia alms book in 1796. In that year arrangements were also made for him to supply the pulpit of the Germantown Mennonite Church on January 29, 1797. As early as 1804 he was a bishop. He died in 1820. The dates of both his ordinations are not known. Another minister of the same period was John Funk. In 1890 there was a nonagenarian still living who well remembered Preacher John Funk. John Geil (1778-1866) was ordained to the ministry about 1810. He was a very active man, preaching even in Northampton county. On November 30, 1852 he wrote a farewell address to his congregation which was published in the September, 1865 *Herald of Truth* and reprinted in John F. Funk's, *Biographical Sketch of Pre. John Geil*, published at Elkhart, Indiana, in 1897. The notes at the beginning of this chapter state that Philip R. Krout (1808-1880) was ordained (probably soon) after the division of 1847. Samuel Leatherman (1815-1904) was ordained to the ministry in October, 1843 and ordained bishop in June, 1876. Preacher John M. Haldeman (1824-1881) was ordained in 1869. From 1876 to 1878 he and N. B. Grubb (a General Conference Mennonite preacher) alternated

preaching at the Germantown Mennonite Church. Haldeman was too progressive for his Franconia brethren, and was interested in evangelism perhaps of the type promoted by the Evangelicals at that time, and because of insubordination was deposed from the ministry. He applied to the May, 1876 conference of the Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonites for admission and was received as a minister. But in a few years he returned to his Lexington congregation as a layman; he died in 1881. John Walter (1830-1908) was ordained to the ministry May 24, 1860. Preacher Jacob R. Gehman (1839-1883) was ordained in 1881, but died two years later from injuries received in falling from a cherry tree. John H. Rosenberger (1832-1910) was ordained October 28, 1884, according to A. J. Fretz.⁵ But Gehman died July 9, 1883; the Franconia Conference on October 4, 1883 gave the Lexington congregation the privilege to ordain a minister; and on August 5, 1884 Rosenberger wrote to Preacher Jacob B. Mensch⁶ and called him "fellow-laborer in the Lord's vineyard." From this it would appear that Rosenberger was ordained in October, 1883. Preacher Aaron N. Freed (1865-) was ordained on May 29, 1901. Joseph G. Ruth (1857-1928) was ordained to the ministry at Lexington on October 24, 1905 and was ordained bishop at Franconia on February 25, 1926. His nephew, Arthur D. Ruth (1892-), was ordained preacher November 27, 1923 at Lexington, and was ordained bishop at Franconia on May 29, 1929. Preacher Claude B. Meyers (1899-) was ordained on December 12, 1933.

The first known deacon of the Lexington Church was Mark Fretz (1750-1840). He signed the Franconia alms book as early as 1784. Deacon Abraham Lapp (1777-1855) was the Lexington treasurer in 1841. Deacon Henry Walter (1801-1867) was ordained in 1842. The next deacon was Michael Ruth (1813-1880). Samuel W. Lapp (1833-1926) was ordained in 1870. After a financial failure and probably a period of inactivity as a deacon he moved to Ayr, Nebraska, in 1878. George Walter (1842-1908) was ordained deacon in 1879. Deacon Henry B. Lapp (1853-1931) was ordained November 13, 1906. The present deacon, Henry K. Delp (1883-), was ordained on October 31, 1922.

Lexington has a list of almost fifty trustees for the last century. Seven are now serving. At the risk of making tedious reading their names are here listed. Jacob Myers, 1837-1856; John Funk, 1837-1844; Henry Ruth, 1837-1844; Peter Swartz, 1837-1843; Henry Walter, 1837-1867; Benjamin Rosenberger, 1837-1841; Samuel Rosenberger, 1837-1843; David Geisinger, 1838-1842; Abraham Krupp, 1843-1846; Martin Moyer, 1844-1846; Joseph Ruth, 1844-1856; Abraham Heastand, 1845-1846; Samuel Funk, 1845-1847; Abraham Meyers, 1846-1854; John Krout, 1846- ?; Abraham Reiff, 1847-1848; Michael Ruth, 1847-1859; Henry Ruth, 1848-1851; Peter Swartz, 1852-1863; Abraham Yother, 1855-1862; Jonas Clymer, 1856-1888; Levi Yoder, 1856-1865; Abraham Moyer, 1860-1879; Samuel Krout,

⁵ *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Henry Rosenberger* . . . , 1906, p. 251.

⁶ This letter is also in the possession of Mary Mensch Lederach, his granddaughter.

1860-1877; Abraham Lapp, 1863-1888; Henry D. Swartley, 1864-1887; William Clymer, 1866-1900; Henry Ruth, 1868-1900; Daniel Geisinger, 1878-1904; Henry R. Swartley, 1880-1896; Henry Leatherman, 1888-1920; Jacob Leatherman, 1889-1898; Henry F. Moyer, 1890-1920; Joseph G. Ruth, 1897-1906; Philip H. Swartley 1898-1903; Samuel R. Swartley 1900-; Henry B. Lapp, 1901-1906; Jacob F. Clymer, 1904-1916; Philip H. Swartley, 1905-1910; Isaiah G. Ruth, 1906-; John B. Garges, 1907-1936; John L. Moyer, 1914-1925; Allen Ruth, 1917-; Harvey S. Moyer, 1920-; Abram O. Frederick, 1924-; Frank Leatherman, 1926-; Allen R. Gehman, 1936-.

Those known to have been sexton (the church does not own a janitor's house) are Samuel Gayman who began serving in 1838 at a salary of \$4.00 per year and the right to pasture the grounds; Jonas Clymer, \$5.00 and pastures; William Clymer, \$10.00 and pastures, and later \$15.00 and pastures; Jacob Leatherman, \$20.00 per year; Jacob Leatherman and J. B. Garges \$18.00 each; John B. Garges, 1907-1920, \$36.00, and 1920-1926, \$65.00; Harry Rosenberger, 1926, \$95.00, and 1927, \$125.00; Samuel Delp 1931-, \$135.00.

Adjoining the meetinghouse is a large cemetery, about eight hundred twenty-five graves having markers. The most common names are Swartley, Ruth, Clymer, Moyer, Lapp, Rosenberger, Swartz, Krout, King, Kratz, Fretz, Heckler, and Detweiler. Other names are Alderfer, Albright, Baum, Bechtel, Benner, Bergey, Bishop, Bruner, Clemmer, Frankenfield, Frick, Funk, Gehman, Geil, Geisinger, Harr, Hedrick, Hendricks, Henge, Hiesland, Krupp, Kulp, Landes, Leatherman, Leidy, Meyer, Overholt, Reiff, Rickert, Rittenhouse, Walter, Weirman, Wisler, Yoder, Yocum, and Zeigler. The oldest stones having dates are of 1760 and 1763.

Church services are held every two weeks on Sunday morning. The first English was introduced into the service in 1890. By 1910 the German was discarded. This was before some of the congregations had an English preacher. In October, 1905 the congregation received permission from the conference to have evening services. These evening services are held every fourth Sunday.

A Sunday school was organized in 1888. The ordained men considered it advisable that since the church services were still in German the Sunday school should be conducted in the same language. But the greater part of the singing was in English. By 1890 all the singing was in English, and the attendance was about one hundred seventy-five. Samuel R. Swartley served as superintendent and chorister. Brother Swartley continued as superintendent for almost thirty years, and was then succeeded by Isaiah G. Ruth. The present superintendent is Franklin L. Leatherman and the attendance is about two hundred. The songbooks used included the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*, *Pentecostal Hymns*, and *Life Songs*. The present choristers are Franklin Leatherman, Allen S. Walters and John L. Ruth.

The Lexington Mennonite Sewing Circle was organized on September 27, 1918. The first officers were, superintendent, Elizabeth Wismer; treasurers, Mary Clemmer and Ella Ruth; and secretary, Kathryn Bishop.

Twenty-six workers were present at the first meeting. For some time the circle experienced difficulty in finding a permanent place of meeting. That problem was settled by John B. Garges. About fourteen years ago he erected a one-story frame building on his own land and allowed the circle to use it. The first meeting was held in this new location on January 27, 1923.

A number of members of the Plain congregation assisted in the work and after January 2, 1928 the organization was known as the Plain and Line Lexington Mennonite Sewing Circle. The average attendance is about twenty workers.

When Preacher Daniel G. Lapp of Nebraska (son of Deacon Samuel W. Lapp of the Lexington Church, who moved to Nebraska) was visiting and preaching in the Franconia Conference in 1897, he helped the Lexington Sunday-school workers organize a Teachers' Meeting. With the exception of from about 1916 to 1920 this teachers' meeting has met regularly since that time. Since 1935 it convenes in the meetinghouse.

Young People's Meetings were held in the Garges building for a year or so about 1934. The programs for each meeting were approved by the-ordained men. But there was some opposition and the work was discontinued.

Preacher Elmer B. Moyer of Souderton also conducted a Bible study class in the Garges building a few years ago.

The membership of the Lexington Mennonite congregation is now one hundred seventy-seven.

Chapter XVI

SOUDERTON

Chestnut Street and Wile Avenue, Souderton, Montgomery County

On May 12, 1860 New Harbor post office was established. The name was changed to Souder's on January 13, 1864. Finally the name Souderton was adopted in March, 1876. As the little village grew the Mennonites of the community became interested in establishing a Souderton congregation.¹

The October, 1879 conference granted the Souderton Mennonites permission to erect a meetinghouse. A brick structure, forty-three by fifty-three feet in size, was immediately built at a cost of \$2,503.77. The first services were held on Christmas Day, 1879. The meetinghouse stood on a lot of two acres and seventy-one perches which was purchased for \$450.00 of Joseph Slifer, a Mennonite, on February 19, 1897. The two most energetic men in arousing sentiment for the proposed building were two members of the Franconia congregation, Herman K. and Samuel K. Godshall; they were brothers. Samuel K. donated a house on Chestnut street to the congregation. Deacon Krupp lived there until the ordination of Preacher Elmer B. Moyer, who has since lived there. The building committee in 1879 consisted of Henry O. Souder, Jacob Detweiler, and Joseph Bergey. The treasurer was Enos H. Moyer.

Services were at first held every third Sunday in the afternoon until 1888 when the time of meeting was changed to every two weeks in the afternoon.

At first the congregation was rather a daughter of the Franconia Church. No congregational organization was set up for over a decade. Finally the members of the Franconia and Rockhill congregations living in or near Souderton were permitted to organize a new congregation. This was done and the Souderton Mennonite congregation observed its first communion service on April 19, 1891. The new congregation consisted of sixty-eight members. Communion was administered by Bishops Josiah Clemmer of Franconia and Samuel Leatherman of Lexington. The October conference of 1891 granted permission for the ordination of a deacon. From a group of six brethren Henry C. Krupp (1848-1929) was ordained on November 5, 1891 by Bishop Josiah Clemmer.

On February 19, 1897 a small lot of land containing 250 square feet was purchased of Jonas H. Moyer; a thirteen-foot addition was then added to the meetinghouse at a cost of \$1,461.15. In 1915 this enlarged building was razed and a new brick meetinghouse, seventy-eight by ninety feet in size, with a seating capacity for about a thousand people, was erected. The

¹ Henry S. Landes, *History of Souderton, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Souderton, Pa., 1930, pp. 23, 35. Joseph B. Diller also contributed a historical sketch, based largely on material given him by Deacon Henry C. Krupp.

cost of the 1915 building was \$11,046.57. On September 3, 1921 the trustees purchased an additional fifty-one perches of land of William M. Clymer.

The pulpit was filled by ministers from various congregations of the conference until 1914. On November 5 of that year the first preacher was ordained by lot from a group of seven brethren. Jacob M. Moyer (1891-) was the one ordained, being then only twenty-three years of age. On October 28, 1919 Elmer B. Moyer (1888-) was ordained to the ministry. In 1924 Deacon Krupp asked for assistance and Harvey C. Freed (1879-) was ordained deacon on October 23.

The services continued to be held on alternate Sundays in the afternoon for many years. At the May conference of 1893 Deacon Krupp secured permission for evening services on Christmas and Thanksgiving Days, and for appointments for visiting ministers. About 1897 evening services began to be held regularly every four weeks. After the 1915 meetinghouse was built services were held regularly every two weeks in the evening and every two weeks in the afternoon, evening and afternoon services alternating. Thus there has been preaching every Sunday since 1915. In the spring of 1935 the congregation decided to change the afternoon service to the forenoon. On May 19 the first Sunday morning service was held. Since that time morning and evening services have alternated, one service every Sunday.

On February 3, 1880 a German Sunday school was organized with Herman K. Godshall as superintendent. After a few years some English classes were introduced and English has now almost completely displaced the German. Herman Godshall continued as superintendent and chorister for a little over a decade. Deacon Henry C. Krupp then took charge of the Sunday school and continued in office until 1929. On March 3, 1929 the following officers were elected: superintendent, Elvin B. Souder; secretary, Herbert A. Derstine; treasurer, Erwin J. Moyer. The superintendents since Brother Souder have been Herbert A. Derstine, Erwin J. Moyer, Elias P. Nice, Elvin B. Souder, Herbert A. Derstine, Wilmer Shisler, and Henry G. Freed. In 1880 the enrollment was more than a hundred. In 1929 it was 580.

The average Sunday-school attendance in 1930 was 469. The income of the school was \$461.05. \$607.79 was given for mission work. The Junior Saving fund amounted to \$132.24.

About 1902 a Sunday-school teachers' meeting was organized. The moving spirit in starting the meeting was Allen A. Freed, later superintendent of the Norristown Mennonite Mission. The teachers and others meet weekly in private homes. From 1921 to 1930 this teachers' meeting gave over \$2,400.00 to the Mennonite Mission in India besides contributions to the South American Mennonite Mission, and other offerings.

By 1911 or 1912 some energetic young people, among them C. F. Derstine, had started a young people's meeting which met in private homes. After a few years it was discontinued. About 1916 it was revived and again met in private homes. After a few years the character of the meeting changed. Group Bible study was undertaken. Those who served as leaders were Clarence F. Derstine and Herbert A. Derstine. From about 1920 to 1924 the group studied under the direction of the Bible Correspondence

School of Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Virginia. From about 1925 to 1928 a Bible study group met in the Souderton meetinghouse where the two ministers arranged their own course of study and served as leaders. Since the close of that work in the meetinghouse there have been no Bible study classes except during the winter of 1934-1935. At that time Paul E. Mininger on leave of absence from the Goshen College faculty taught classes in Religious Education and Sunday School Teacher Training, as extension work from Goshen College. But the class was not a congregational group; Blooming Glen perhaps contributed the largest number of students. Young people from Salford, Souderton, Towamencin, Franconia, and Plain also participated in the classes. The class met in a private home in Souderton.

On February 3, 1917 a group of interested people met at the home of Lizzie P. Gehman, 47 Green Street, Souderton, and organized the Souderton Sewing Circle. The officers elected were Anna Nice, superintendent; Maggie Allebach, assistant superintendent; Mary Souder, secretary; Martha Moyer, assistant secretary; Jennie Ebersole, treasurer; and Maggie C. Diller, assistant treasurer. Ten days later they held their first meeting with forty sisters present. Besides donating money and garments to the needy of the community, the circle also gives to the Eastern Mennonite Home, various city missions, and Grand View Hospital (in the community). In 1922 they began to support an orphan in India. The work is also supported by members of the Franconia and Salford congregations. Indeed the first superintendent was a member of the Franconia congregation.

The first choristers of the Souderton Mennonite Church were Herman K. Godshall, Jonas H. Freed, and Abraham Alderfer. Since that time the following have served; Allen A. Freed, Mahlon Alderfer, Calvin Musselman, George R. Swartley (and now his son), Warren H. Swartley.

The first hymnbook was *Zions Harfe*, followed by *Hymns and Tunes*, and *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*. The Sunday school has also used *The Gospel Call*, *The Very Best*, *Life Songs*, *New Songs of Praise and Power*, and *The Gospel Message*.

The cost of maintenance of the meetinghouse, including light, coal, sexton wages, etc., is more than a thousand dollars per year.

The sextons of the congregation have been Jonas M. Freed, 1879-1893 or 1894; John C. Clymer, 1893 or 1894-1915; Edwin Moyer, 1915-1918; J. B. Diller; Frank Freed; Joseph Hendricks; and William M. Clymer 1921-

The trustees in 1879 were Abraham G. Stover, Samuel M. Freed, and John Frederick. They served until 1891. Then (or later) the following were chosen, Abraham G. Stover, Ephraim B. Freed, and Christian H. Moyer (treasurer); these served until 1915. On June 29, 1916 the old trustees appointed, with the consent of the congregation, the present trustees, Michael R. Clemmer, Alpheus K. Allebach, and Horace Rosenberger; Brother Clemmer is treasurer.

One can readily see that the Chestnut Street Church is an active group. The congregation has grown splendidly. In 1891 there were less than seven-

ty-five members; in 1919, 398; and in 1936, 510. The spiritual life of the congregation is very good; some of the most active home mission workers are members at Souderton.

Elmer B. and Lena Moyer took charge of the Norristown Mission in 1919, but due to his ordination at Souderton Brother Moyer relinquished his position at Norristown the next year. Allen A. and Lizzie Freed, also of the Souderton congregation, then had charge of the mission until 1921. Others of the congregation who have engaged in home mission work are Sisters Martha D. Moyer, Mamie Freed, and Alice Keeler. The workers in the established stations of the Mission Board are named in Part IV, Chapter IV.

Two widely-known workers have come from this congregation, J. D. Mininger and C. F. Derstine.

Jacob D. Mininger was born near Sellersville, Pennsylvania, June 9, 1879. As a boy he attended Sunday school and church services in the Rock-hill Mennonite meetinghouse. In 1899 he was baptized in the Souderton meetinghouse and received into the fellowship of the Souderton congregation. He was united in marriage to Hettie B. Kulp of Danboro, Pennsylvania, on July 27, 1904. He then transferred his membership to the congregation of his wife, Doylestown. As a young man he assisted in the work of the Philadelphia Mennonite Mission. In 1904 he was called to Marshallville, Ohio, to assume the superintendency of the Old Peoples' Home. Here he remained until 1909. He is best known as the Superintendent of the Mennonite Gospel Mission, Kansas City, Kansas. He has served in that capacity almost a quarter of a century. He was ordained to the ministry at the East Holbrook Mennonite church near La Junta, Colorado, October 5, 1911. He has also served as the Field Evangelist of the Missouri-Kansas Conference; Assistant Moderator of the same organization; instructor of Young People's Institutes at Eastern Mennonite School, at the East Union congregation, Iowa and at Arbutus Park, Johnstown, Pa.; Short Bible Term instructor at Hesston College and Bible School; Acting-Superintendent of the Mennonite Children's Home, Kansas City; member of the Executive Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities; and many times as a Bible Conference speaker. At the present time he is writing one book, *Exalting Christ in the City*. He is also at the present time a member of the Executive Committee of the Mennonite Board of Education.

Clayton F. Derstine was born at Souderton on August 17, 1891. He was received into the Souderton congregation in December, 1911, Bishop Jonas Mininger baptizing him. Two weeks after his conversion he began to teach a Sunday-school class. He was soon leading the Sunday-school teachers' meetings, and the young people's meeting. He also helped in cottage meeting work, and found time to deliver addresses in many Sunday schools near Souderton. In 1913 he transferred his membership to Altoona, Pennsylvania, where he accepted mission work. On November 22, 1914 Bishops J. N. Durr and Abram Metzler ordained him to the ministry. Immediately he was called into the evangelistic field and has labored

as an evangelist for over twenty years. During this time he has had a very fruitful ministry. From 1915 to 1924 he was pastor at Eureka, Illinois. While there he was ordained bishop, December 11, 1921, by Bishops Andrew Schrock and J. A. Heiser. On December 25, 1924 he moved to Kitchener, Ontario, his present charge. For the past fourteen years he has been editor or associate editor of the *Christian Monitor*. For eleven years he has been on the teaching staff of the Ontario Mennonite Bible School. He has written a dozen books and booklets and has compiled one songbook, *The Sheet Music of Heaven*.

Chapter XVII

BLOOMING GLEN

Formerly PERKASIE

Hilltown Township, Bucks County

The ordinations of bishops in the eastern district of the Franconia Conference are conducted in the Blooming Glen¹ meetinghouse. Blooming Glen is the second largest congregation in the conference. Battle says, "The partition deed of 1735 opening the manor of Perkasio for settlement was a strong inducement to Mennonite immigration. . . . The Perkasio or Hilltown Mennonite meeting-house was built in 1753 upon a small lot on Henry Funk's land, forty-four feet square in the rear being reserved as a burial-ground. This was a log church about as large as an old school house." Over fifty years ago the local press² contained a historical sketch of the church. The first meetinghouse, the author states, ". . . stood where the present grave yard is located just to the left side of the present entrance to the graveyard, about 20 feet or so back. It was a log structure about twenty by twenty-four feet or so, exact size unknown and the grave yard adjoining it was forty feet square." Evidently Henry Funk simply donated the land without granting a deed. The oldest deed known was granted by John Kratz and his wife, Mary, to the trustees of the "Perkasie" Mennonite congregation in the township of Hilltown in 1793. Kratz conveyed sixty and one-half perches of land to John Funk, Jacob Kolb, Jacob Hunsicker, and Daniel High. On February 7, 1818 John Kratz's son, Jacob, granted two more lots of land to the congregation. Jacob Kratz and his wife, Mary, for a consideration of \$100, conveyed two separate tracts of land to Isaac Hunsicker, Jacob Hoy^{2a} (High) and Henry Kulb, "trustees of the Perkasio Menonist Society." The one tract was one acre and the other was eleven perches of land. Evidently the one acre was the site of the present meetinghouse and the eleven perches were in the cemetery. A draught for the two lots which were surveyed November 2, 1817 so locates them. Between the eleven-perch tract and the road was the "Mennonists meetings lot," evidently the 1793 purchase, for a later note on the draught appended by someone states that "The graveyard contains in all 76.5 perches."

In 1823 the "Perkasie" Mennonites decided to erect a new meetinghouse. One of the sites considered was the lot on which the house of Mrs. Allan Stover is now located. Continuing the story from the *Central News* article, ". . . But the majority of the members were for the spot on the hill, the only objection was because there was a mudhole there. So some one

¹ Quintus Leatherman, historian of the congregation, contributed much of the data of this chapter. All references to Battle are from J. H. Battle, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, Chicago, 1887, p. 599.

² *The Central News*, Perkasio, Pennsylvania, August 3, 1882.

^{2a} Likely a mistake for the German, Hoch.

suggested that this muddy place could all be filled up, which was done, and a house erected thereon of thirty-eight by forty-five feet, built of stone. After a while this proved to be [too] small and an addition of some ten or twelve feet in length was added, which made a house thirty-eight by fifty-seven feet. . . ." The 1823 meetinghouse was erected at or near the present site.

Again the house of worship became too small. ". . . So after holding their harvest thank offering on Monday, July 24, [1882] . . . on Tuesday morning, July 25th work was begun of tearing down the house of worship." In its place was erected a new stone meetinghouse, fifty-one by sixty-five feet. On Sunday, November 26, 1882, the first meeting was held in the new meetinghouse. "It is not quite furnished, the pews are not all in, but it was crowded to the utmost, between six and seven hundred persons being present. The heater sent up its heat to such an extent [as] to oblige some to take off their coats."³

The congregation continued to thrive. In 1925 an annex, twenty-four by fifty feet was added to the rear side of the meetinghouse at a cost of about \$12,500. The dimensions given in the *Central News* article must not have been accurate for the meetinghouse now measures about fifty by eighty-four feet. It contains a vestibule and cloakroom with two doors on the first floor, and a sort of balcony on the second floor. The balcony is used for nine classes of the primary department of the Sunday school. In the fall of 1935 curtains were hung to separate the several classes. A number of Bible study classes also meet on the balcony (which may be closed off from the main auditorium) every Monday evening during the winter seasons.

Very likely the first preacher to occupy the Blooming Glen pulpit in the 1753 meetinghouse was Abraham Swartz of Deep Run who had been ordained in 1738 and was ordained bishop in 1756. The first known resident preacher was Jacob Meyer (1730-1778) who was ordained in 1758. Preacher Samuel Meyer (1734- ?) was ordained in 1769. Henry Hunsberger (1768-1854) was ordained preacher in 1807 and bishop some time later. Another early minister was Jacob Hunsicker (1770-1856). In 1844 Preacher Henry B. Moyer (1818-1892) moved to Bucks county and began preaching at Blooming Glen. He had been ordained in Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, in 1843. Isaac Oberholtzer (1815-1887) was ordained preacher about 1847 and bishop about 1853. In 1857 George Landis (1796-1881), the first preacher at the Flatland Church, moved to Hilltown township and thereafter preached at Blooming Glen. Preacher Abraham F. Moyer (1822-1902) was ordained on November 6, 1855. Henry B. Rosenberger (1844-1921) was ordained to the ministry on October 27, 1885 and was ordained bishop on November 21, 1895. Peter B. Loux (1847-1922) was ordained June 9, 1896. Henry G. Anglemoyer (1859-1908) was ordained to the ministry on November 22, 1900. I. Frank Swartz (1860-1937) was ordained preacher on October 29, 1908. Preacher Joseph Gross (1866-1921) was ordained on November 26, 1918. Deacon Wilson R. Moyer

³ *Central News*, November 30, 1882.

(1872-) was ordained preacher on July 5, 1921. The last preacher, Melvin A. Bishop (1893-) was ordained on May 27, 1930.

The deacons are fewer in number. The names of the first ones are lost, as is very often the case. Deacon Samuel Meyer (1765-1847) is the first one known. Samuel H. Moyer (1878-1884) was ordained deacon in 1853. Deacon Jacob Hunsberger (1788-1878) was "ordained pretty young." He never read the Scripture lesson. David L. Fretz (1836-1925) was ordained deacon on June 5, 1876 but had only served about a decade when his brother and the church trustees became involved in litigation and the case was carried to the January, 1888 term of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Deacon Fretz stood by his brother while the ministers and conference supported the trustees morally, although conference demanded that the trustees take the case out of the Supreme Court if possible. As that was impossible an acknowledgment of a transgression was required of them. In 1893 Deacon Fretz seems to have sued Bishop Samuel G. Gross of Doylestown. Consequently in 1894 Conference expelled Fretz from the church. Fretz then united with the General Conference Mennonites as a layman. Deacon Levi Yoder (1827-1910) was ordained in the fall of 1884. The successor of Fretz was Tobias R. Gehman (1846-1913), ordained November 10, 1896. Levi N. Moyer (1864-1936) was ordained deacon October 29, 1908. He was the first deacon at Blooming Glen to stand while he read the Scripture. Wilson R. Moyer (1872-) was ordained deacon on June 30, 1914. Seven years later he was called to the ministry. Deacon Norman M. Moyer (1892-) was ordained on October 25, 1921.

As was indicated above, the trustees in 1793 were John Funk, Jacob Kolb, Jacob Hunsicker, and Daniel High. The 1818 deed was granted to Isaac Hunsicker, Jacob High, and Henry Kolb. On April 7, 1863 Samuel H. Moyer and his wife, Anna, sold eighty perches of land for burial purposes for a consideration of \$51.50 to Abraham Hunsicker, Samuel A. Moyer, and John S. Moyer. In 1863 the same trustees also paid Jacob and Catharine Yeakel \$115 for one hundred fifty-five perches of land. On April 13, 1885 Christian F. Moyer, Junior, and Tobias N. Moyer, administrators of the estate of Samuel H. Moyer, deceased, conveyed one hundred nineteen perches of land to Isaac H. Moyer, Senior, and Abraham Hunsicker, trustees of the Perkasio Mennonite congregation. This land was subject to two dowers. On April 22, 1892 Levi N. Moyer and wife sold one hundred four perches of land for \$125 to Isaac H. Moyer, Christian F. Moyer, Junior, and Abraham M. Hunsicker, trustees of the Mennonite congregation of Hilltown. Two years later (April 1, 1894) the same trustees bought thirteen acres and one hundred twenty-eight and eighty-nine hundredths perches of land of Harry D. Ruos, George B. Ruos, Joseph A. Ruos, and Emma his wife. The price was \$1,275. On May 21, 1931 the (present) trustees, Henry R. Shaddinger, Eugene M. Moyer, and Reuben R. Landis purchased one hundred forty and eighty-five hundredths perches of land from Levi N. Moyer. H. R. Shaddinger succeeds Edwin F. Stover as trustee.

The church owns a house for the sexton to occupy. Those known to have been sextons are Jacob Yeakel, John Proctor, J. K. Angeny, Amandus Rush, and Abraham M. Stover since 1920.

As is customary in the Franconia Conference district church services are held every two weeks in the morning and every four weeks in the evening. Evening services began in 1911 when kerosene lights were installed. These were later displaced by acetylene lights and still later by electric lights.

The first regular English preacher was Henry G. Anglemoyer, ordained in 1900.

The church used the German *Zions Harfe* as a hymnal. This was followed by *Psalms and Hymns*, *Hymns and Tunes*, *Mennonite Hymns*, and *Church and Sunday School Hymnal*.

One Isaac H. Moyer (who lived near a dam and was so characterized in German for identification) was a church chorister years ago. Abram Hunsicker was an active chorister twenty-five years ago. When he died in 1911 Bishop Rosenberger called for a rising vote to elect Leidy D. Hunsicker, chorister and Enos M. Moyer, assistant chorister. Both are still serving. Leidy D. Hunsicker had served as Sunday-school chorister prior to that time. The present assistant chorister in the Sunday school is Willard Shaddinger.

The first Sunday school at Blooming Glen was held to teach the children and young people the German language. This was started as early as 1877 and continued for several years. Among the teachers were John Proctor and Henry Hunsberger.

In 1882 the matter of starting another Sunday school was agitated. The new meetinghouse was erected in that year and such occasions are favorable for opening new lines of work. The December 21, 1882 *Central News* carried the note, "A Sunday School is to be started shortly at the new Mennonite meeting house at this place." Perhaps the publication of the proposed innovation was not very tactful. On January 4, 1883 another item was published. "There will be no Sunday School opened as reported." But in 1883 a Sunday school was conducted in the Yellow schoolhouse between Blooming Glen and Silverdale. Some Mennonites likely participated. The Yellow schoolhouse was sold in 1886 and a new schoolhouse erected in Blooming Glen. A Sunday school was then organized in the Blooming Glen schoolhouse. Finally in the spring of 1887 a Sunday school was started in the Blooming Glen Mennonite meetinghouse. On June 23, 1887 the local press reported an average attendance of one hundred seventy-five in this Sunday school. Opposition was rather strong at first. One preacher declared he'd rather his boys would go fishing than attend Sunday school. But to his credit it should be said that he later became an active supporter.

The adult classes studied the German New Testament. The children used German A-B-C books, published by the Lutherans or Reformed. German Question Books were used quite early. Finally German, later English, quarterlies published by the Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhart, Indiana, were used. Sunday-school cards were in use by 1909.

Lesson Picture Rolls came into use about 1909 or 1910, though conference passed a resolution discouraging their use in 1914.

Songbooks used in the Sunday school included *Psalms and Hymns; Pennsylvania Choral Harmony* (bilingual); *Pilger Lieder; Hymns and Tunes; Heart Melodies, Books One and Two; The Gospel Call; Gospel Hymns; Life Songs; Rodeheaver's Select Songs; and Songs of Faith and Triumph.*

A Sunday-school record book of 1892 records that the school was opened on April 3 of that year. William F. Myers was superintendent; Abram M. Hunsicker, assistant superintendent; William D. Bishop, secretary; and Isaac M. Hunsicker, treasurer. There were fourteen classes of which certainly five, probably seven, were German.

Superintendents since 1887 include, Joseph Rosenberger (?), John Proctor, Addison Moyer (?), William F. Myers, Wilson R. Moyer, Titus Moyer, Daniel Myers, Joseph Gross, Henry R. Shaddinger, Abram Gehman, Ephraim L. Gehman, William G. Detweiler, Robert M. Nase, Walter Albright, Ephraim Detweiler and Wilmer Yoder.

The average attendance in the primary department is one hundred fifty. The average attendance for the whole Sunday school is four hundred thirty-five. The average weekly offerings are \$26.56. \$112.50 is given every three months toward the support of Sarah Lapp, missionary to India. This has been done since 1919.

About 1902 a Sunday-school teachers' meeting was started but was discontinued after some years. In 1921 a teachers' meeting was again started by Abram Gehman, Ephraim Gehman, and Leidy D. Hunsicker. These meetings were held in private homes until 1930, since which time the group meets each Wednesday evening in the anteroom of the Blooming Glen meetinghouse. Once a month the meeting is held in the Perkasio meetinghouse. Offerings are lifted for mission support and the meeting consists of singing, a devotional period, short talks, and a discussion of the Sunday-school lesson.

A sewing circle was organized on March 13, 1915 at the home of William M. Moyer in Perkasio and was called the "Blooming Glen and Perkasio Mennonite Sewing Circle." Libbie Bishop was president; Florence Moyer, assistant; and Emma Shaddinger, secretary.

The first special meetings were held August 27-September 2, 1911. The sudden death of two of the sponsors of these meetings, Abram M. Hunsicker and Mrs. William Bishop, caused much comment. S. G. Shetler and Daniel Kauffman were instructors in these "Bible-Instruction Meetings." One of the main goals was the restoration of the bonnet which had partly been lost. This was more or less successfully accomplished. Sunday-school meetings were held at Blooming Glen August 23, 24, 1912. An all-day Sunday-school meeting was held at Perkasio July 11, 1914. A number of Bible instruction, Sunday-school, and evangelistic meetings have been conducted since that time.

In 1918 William M. Moyer's Sunday-school class gave \$200 to build a home for a native worker in India. This was probably the beginning of such support by classes.

During the fall and winter of 1933-1934 the first regular Bible study meetings were held each Monday evening. The work was sponsored by the ministry and the teachers of the adults (one huge class of a few hundred) were Wilson R. Moyer, Norman M. Moyer, and Melvin Bishop, one serving each week. The children met in the balcony in a number of classes. The adults studied the Gospel of John. Each week mimeographed sheets of questions on the lesson of the next week were distributed. The next week the people turned in their answers, which papers were graded. The following winter the General Epistles were studied. In 1935-1936 the Acts of the Apostles was the subject of study, the class ending the last week of March. In 1936-37 Biblical Doctrines were studied.

One must rejoice at the spiritual life that is evident in the congregation. Part of this awakening was due to the personality and message of a few visiting ministers. The pioneer evangelist of the Mennonite Church, John S. Coffman, preached at Deep Run, Doylestown, Blooming Glen, and Lexington in 1896. His preaching led many young people to the momentous decision of accepting Christ. On October 6 of the same year A. D. Wenger preached at Blooming Glen. The local press stated, "Rev. Wenger of Virginia preached in the Blooming Glen Meeting on Tuesday. The sermon was in English, and a particularly eloquent and forceful one." The usual custom at the time was for young people to marry before uniting with the church. But on January 31, 1897 forty young people were baptized at Blooming Glen and only eight of them were married. It has probably been a different church since.

One characteristic of the Blooming Glen and Deep Run churches is a tendency to be less severe in their discipline. Two divergent tendencies then manifest themselves, one is for the placing of more emphasis on spiritual life, and the other is the danger of worldliness. But where discipline is very strict undue attention is apt to be given to externals, young people are driven from the church, and the danger of formalism faces the group. As long as human nature is as it is, the problem of the right type of discipline will face the Christian church. The Franconia Conference has always been troubled with the discipline question. For example, at conference in 1903 one bishop strongly condemned the frightful worldliness of the churches. Whereupon Bishop Henry Rosenberger declared if all "these things" were to be suddenly cut off and forbidden it would ruin his churches. The one who recorded the minutes (Jacob B. Mensch) observed that the case had two sides. After discussion it was recommended that every minister should earnestly testify against conforming to the world, a proud manner of life, societies, clubs and (membership in) the (trade, and labor) unions.

Several members of the congregation have found work elsewhere. Roy Wenger, originally of Virginia, but for some years a member at Blooming Glen, was ordained deacon at Fentress, Virginia, on June 28, 1936. He married Marian Rosenberger of the Blooming Glen Congregation.

In 1935 Katie Rickert, a nurse, went to Horton, West Virginia, to carry on mission work.

William G. Detweiler is the only recent son of the congregation who has been ordained to the ministry. He was born May 3, 1903 near Blooming Glen. On August 13, 1927 he married Anna Landes of the Skippack congregation. He served as superintendent of the Blooming Glen Mennonite Sunday School for several years. In 1928 he accepted the superintendency of the Norristown (Pennsylvania) Mennonite Mission where he served until 1931 when he accepted a similar position at the Canton (Ohio) Mennonite Mission and is still serving there. On June 11, 1933 Bishop S. E. Allgyer ordained him to the ministry.

The growth of the Blooming Glen congregation has been steady. In 1890 the membership was about three hundred. It will probably soon be double that number. The congregation's history is largely one of peace. The division of 1847 seems to have left it untouched.

This chapter would be quite incomplete without again mentioning a member of the Blooming Glen congregation, Clayton H. Kratz, the young man who gave his life, not in slaying his fellow men but in saving the lives of his brethren. He was one of those who responded to the calls of the starving in Russia in 1920, but he made the supreme sacrifice when his work was scarcely yet begun.

* * * *

Just a word should be added regarding the Mennonite trek to Canada after the Revolutionary War, since it involved many members of this congregation. As early as 1786 a group of American Mennonites who desired to remain British subjects and who were perhaps also interested in the financial opportunities of Canada made the journey to the Niagara district. Another group left in 1799, among whom were Jacob Meyer (1767-1833) and Valentine Kratz (1760-1824) both of whom were later ordained to the ministry at Vineland. Kratz was ordained in 1801 on the authority of a letter written from Bedminster, Bucks county, by six officials on September 4, 1801. He was the first Mennonite preacher in Canada. Jacob Meyer was on a preaching trip to Blooming Glen in 1833 where he died on June 5 and is buried. There are tombstones to Meyer both at Blooming Glen and in the cemetery of the Moyer church at Vineland, Ontario. A third migration took place in 1800; this was the largest of them all. Among the surnames in this group were Fretz, High, Kulp, and Hunsberger. By 1802 thirty-three families are known to have migrated from Bucks county, Pennsylvania, to Lincoln county, Ontario. S. F. Coffman states, "The movement of the Mennonites into Canada from the United States had the same purpose as their earlier pilgrimage from Europe, the security of their faith and the promotion of their religious principles to their children and community." And yet even the emigration from Europe to America had not been solely religious. The Franconia bishops wrote in 1773 that various motives had led their forefathers to emigrate—heavy taxes, religious oppression, and financial allurements. It is to be doubted if the exodus to Canada was motivated by purely religious objectives, though they may have played a prominent part.

Chapter XVIII

DEEP RUN

Bedminster Township, Bucks County

One of the oldest deeds for land now owned by a church belonging to the Franconia Conference is the deed for the Deep Run Church land.¹ At least one deed ought to be copied in full for this history! Here it is.

This Indenture made The Twenty fourth Day of March in the Year of our Lord One Thousand seven hundred & forty six Between William Allen of the City of Philadelphia Esquire of the one Part and Abraham Swartz, Hans Friedt, David Kolb, Marcus Oberholtz, Jacob Wismar & Jacob Oberholtz, all of Plumstead Township in the County of Bucks Yeomen Members of the religious Society of People called Menonists in Plumstead Township aforesaid of the other part. Witnetseth That the said William Allen as well For and in Consideration of Five Shillings lawfull Money to him in hand well & Truly paid by the said Abraham Swartz, Hans Friedt, David Kolb, Marcus Oberholtz, Jacob Wismar & Jacob Oberholtz in behalf of themselves and the rest of the said Society the Receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged and for divers other good and valuable considerations him thereunto specially moving He the said William Allen hath covenanted and granted and by these Presents for themselves for himselve his Heirs and assigns Doth covenant and grant to and with the said Abraham Swartz, Hans Friedt, David Kolb, Marcus Oberholtz, Jacob Wismar and Jacob Oberholtz their Heirs and Assigns That he the said William Allen and his Heirs and all and every other Person and Persons and his and their Heirs which now are or hereafter shall stand be seized of and in All That Tract of Land situate in Plumstead Township aforesaid Beginning at a corner Post in a line of Other Land of the said William Allen & extending thence by the same North West one hundred and sixty perches to a corner marked Black Oak and North East fifty perches to a corner post Thence by Deilman Kolbs Land South East one hundred and sixty perches to a corner Post Thence South West by the said William Allen's Land fifty perches to the place of Beginning containing Fifty acres of Land and also of and in the Reversions and Remainders Rents, Issues and Proffits thereof with the Rights Members, Improvements Hereditaments and appurts whatsoever thereunto belonging. shall and will

¹ Copied by I. Erwin Yothers, who was also of help in other ways. The late John L. Derstine submitted much data. H. Harrison Yothers was also of assistance. Published source materials were of value; see

J. H. Battle, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, Chicago, 1887, pp. 576-589; also

William H. W. Davis, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, Revised by Warren S. Ely and John W. Jordan, New York, Chicago, 1905, Volume II, pp. 57, 58.

from time to time and at all times hereafter forever stand and be seized of and in all and singular the said described Tract of land and premises with appurtenances to the several Uses, Intents and purpose hereinafter particularly mentioned limited and declared and under the Conditions Provisoos and Limations herein expressed concerning the same and to no other use Intent or purpose whatsoever That is to say to the use Bennefit and Behoof of the religious Society or Congregation of the people called Menonists at Plumstead Township aforesaid forever and for a place to erect a house of Religious Worship and if Occasion require for a place to bury their Dead. Provided always And it is hereby further covenanted and concluded upon and agreed by and between the same Parties and the true intent and meaning of them and of these presents is That if the said Society shall at any Time hereafter be without a minister or public preacher regularly ordained according to the Customs & Constitutions of the Menonists Church for the space of Five Years at one Time then and then and thereupon This Indenture shall be void and all the use of hereinbefore mentioned and declared shall cease and determine anything herein contained to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding In Witness where of the said Parties to these presents have interchangeably set their hands and Seals hereto Dated the Day and Year first above Written

William Allen (red seal)

Scaled and Delivered in the presence of us
William Parsons I Prichard (?)

This deed was not recorded for over a century and a half. On the outside of the old parchment is a statement that it was ". . . Recorded May 22. A. D. 1903. Harry F. Molloy, Recorder."

The publication of this deed should clear up at least one popular bit of misinformation, and that is that services must be held every Sunday. As a matter of fact as far back as is known, at least in 1847, services actually were conducted every Sunday—contrary to the usual practice in this district. But the 1746 deed does not require weekly services. The county histories have the names of only three of the six trustees correct.

The congregation still has a silver communion cup which tradition claims Allen presented to the congregation when he donated their church lot and farm. It was used until 1920.

Very likely the Plumstead and Bedminster² Mennonites erected their first house of worship, a log structure, in 1746. "In 1766 the log house was replaced by a stone one, about fifty yards from the former on a knoll on the north bank of the creek." Battle gives the dimensions of the 1766 stone meetinghouse situated along the Deep Run creek as thirty-five by fifty-eight feet. Part of this building was used as a dwelling house, probably for the sexton-tenant of the church-farm. "This arrangement was discontinued in

² Bedminster township was created at least in part from Plumstead in 1742. But popular usage is sometimes slow in changing a name; and this was not the only time doubtful descriptions were given of the location of tracts in colonial times.

1794,³ when the building was remodeled." The 1766 building was "enlarged and repaired" in 1795, but the enlargement may have been only within the structure, caused by the removal of the dwelling section. This is not known definitely, though. The original log building was used as a school until it was torn down in 1842. In 1872 the stone meetinghouse was also torn down and a new one was built, also of stone, fifty by sixty-five feet in size. This is the present meetinghouse. About twenty years ago a porch was added to the northeast end of the meetinghouse, in conformity with the tendency since 1900 to build porches on the Franconia conference meetinghouses.

Davis' *History* states:

The author visited the old stone meetinghouse in the spring of 1872, a few days before it was pulled down to make way for the new one, at the time the accompanying sketch was made. Inside and out it had all the quaintness of its day and generation, low eaves, steep roof, heavy cornices, and the doors in the portion formerly used as a dwelling in two parts, an upper and a lower. The men as well as the women, sat on benches without backs, those for the women ranged across the room, those for the men along either side, each successive bench being placed at a little higher elevation as they neared the wall, with rows of pegs suspended from the ceiling, and also in the wall, to hang their hats on. On the north end was a vestibule provided with pegs and shelves for the cloaks and bonnets of the women. Across the central portion of the south end was a raised platform with a long desk used as a pulpit, on which lay a German Bible printed at Germantown, by Christopher Saur, in 1743, with heavy back and brass clasps, and, beside it, were two hymn-books, also in German, bearing the imprint of 1803. The two old-fashioned stoves were no doubt cast to be put into the first stone meetinghouse built there, for one of them bore the inscription, "Matthias G. Melin, May 28, 1766," and the other, "Abraham Meier, 1766."

Near the present meetinghouse stands an old abandoned schoolhouse, the successor of the original log building torn down in 1842. But the present building was a community school, though of course the Mennonites furnished a large part of the pupils. It was in this school that the Mennonite preacher, Samuel Godshalk, taught. (Godshalk was ordained about 1850). Preacher Enos Wismer has a slip of paper which has been handed down in the Wismer family for over ninety years. The paper, about the size of a bank draft, is decorated with red, blue, and green ink, and reads as follows,

REWARD

This is to certify that Abraham Wismer Obtained Head In my School Fry-day the 10th A D 1843. Deep Run School. Given By Samuel Godshalk Teacher Bedminster Bucks County State of penn.

About a decade ago the Historical Society of Bucks County repaired the old schoolhouse and placed on it a concrete roof. There are music notes written on the ceiling joists; it is an interesting building to visit.

³ A stone in the wall says the enlargement was in 1795.

One of the six trustees in 1746 was Abraham Swartz, ordained preacher in 1738 and bishop in 1756. He was blind during his later ministry but continued to preach. Another preacher in the Deep Run circuit in 1773 was Abraham Landes, ordained in 1758. The next known preacher was Jacob Gross, a German immigrant, ordained preacher between 1773 and 1796, and bishop by 1804. He died in 1810. Abraham Wismer (1746-1823) was the next preacher. Wismer was succeeded by Abraham Overholt (1765-1834) who was also ordained by 1796. Preacher Daniel Landis (1769-1841) was ordained by 1832, perhaps long before that year. Christian Gross (1776-1865) was a preacher in 1834. Abraham Kulp (1771-1848) was another Deep Run preacher. The next minister was Abraham Meyer (1798-1852). Isaac F. Meyer (1812-1896) was ordained to the ministry on June 12, 1843 and became an active man and influential leader. Samuel Godshalk (1817-1896) was ordained preacher about 1849 or 1850; he was also a chorister and school teacher. Preacher John Gross (1814-1903) was ordained in 1852. John M. Leatherman (1845-1924) was ordained to the ministry October 25, 1889. Preacher Jacob M. Rush (1862-) was ordained on October 24, 1895. William S. Gross (1866-1903) was ordained on December 12, 1901 but his life was cut off by pneumonia and tetanus. Enos B. Wismer (1868-) was ordained on June 4, 1903. Wilson Overholt (1889-) was ordained on October 26, 1922. Abram W. Yothers (1903-) was ordained to the ministry on October 25, 1934.

The names of the early deacons are lost. Unfortunately the 1773 letter does not list the deacons. The first known deacon was Rudolph Landes. Henry Meyer, a deacon, was born about 1750 and died in 1832. Joseph Nash (1753-1830) was a deacon "for many years." Abraham Fretz (1769-1844) also served as a deacon. Abraham Wismer (1791-1859) was ordained about 1829. Samuel M. Shelly (1796-1873) was a deacon already in 1849. Deacon Jacob K. Overholt (1826-1891) was ordained on November 1, 1859. At once he began to keep a church record. The next deacon ordained was Abraham Meyers (1817-1895). Deacon Henry S. Shelly (1837-1905) was ordained on October 22, 1891. John L. Derstine (1864-1932) was ordained on June 11, 1896. Joseph B. Overholt (1860-1927) was ordained deacon on October 26, 1905. Daniel G. Gahman (1878-) was ordained on October 20, 1927. The last deacon ordained is Harvey M. Meyers (1893-) ordained on May 24, 1932.

Seven additional lots of land, ranging in size from twelve perches to one acre and forty perches, were purchased in 1857, 1861, 1873, 1874, 1887, 1899, and 1906.

The trustees are elected, one each year, for three-year terms. For 1936 the trustees were George Smell, Henry Overholt, and William Myers.

A. J. Fretz⁴ says, "Hans George Shaddinger, according to the tradition of the family was a native of Wittenburgh, Germany. Emigrated to America in . . . 1753. Taught school at Deep Run. Had rent free for taking care of the Mennonite meetinghouse. Children: . . . Elizabeth (mrd.

⁴ *A Brief History of Jacob Wismer and a Complete Genealogical Family Register*, Elkhart, Ind., 1893, p. 71.

Tinsman)" (The church owns the home of their sexton-tenant.) According to tradition a woman named Tinsman lived in the sexton's house in 1847. Since 1860 the following have served as sextons, Jacob H. Bryan, Mahlon Myers, Joseph S. Meyers, Philip Krout, William M. Meyers, Romandus Erb, Milton M. Meyers, Abram K. Yothers, David G. Leatherman, Charles R. Detweiler, Samuel M. Meyers, Harvey R. Detweiler, Raymond Rush, Theodore K. Leatherman and John G. Gehman.

Church services are held every Sunday morning. No evening services are held in the meetinghouse. Beginning in 1896 an English hymn was sung at the close of the regular service. Today the use of German is almost altogether obsolete at Deep Run. There has been no German preaching since 1925. *Zions Harfe* was the only hymnal used until about 1896 when *Hymns and Tunes* was introduced. Later the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* was adopted. Abraham S. Meyers was chorister from 1845 until 1896. From 1896 to 1908 Abraham Godshalk was chorister. Since 1908 the choristers are Samuel G. Detweiler and Edwin M. Myers.

The school teacher and preacher Samuel Godshalk (1817-1896) conducted a German Sunday school on Sunday afternoons each summer from about 1872 to 1877 either in the meetinghouse or in the old schoolhouse near by. About 1877 a Sunday school was organized in the "Western Brick" schoolhouse, mostly led by the General Conference Mennonites. But quite a number of Deep Run Mennonites also attended. After the death of Samuel Godshalk and as long as Preacher John Gross was living no Sunday school was organized in the Deep Run meetinghouse.

A Sunday school was finally organized at Deep Run in 1904. It met every Sunday from the very beginning, and continued throughout the year. It has five officers, fourteen teachers, and about four hundred fifty scholars. Those who have served as superintendent are Abram Godshalk, Samuel Godshalk, John G. Gehman, John B. Detweiler, William Rush, Henry Shelly, Allen Rush, Daniel Gehman, John L. High, I. Erwin Yothers, Abram Yothers, Levi M. Meyers, and Abram M. Meyers. Assistant superintendents included Cornelius Meyers, Joseph Overholt, I. Erwin Yothers, Henry Overholt, Paul Rush, Walter Rush, Abram Yothers, Levi Myers, Abram Myers, and Irwin Nace.

The Sunday school has used the following songbooks, *New Songs of Pentecost Number Three*, *New Songs of Praise and Power Numbers 1, 2, 3*.

A Sunday-school teachers' meeting was organized about 1918. About 1928 it was discontinued but in 1930 it was started a second time. During the summer the meetings are held in the Plumstead meetinghouse and during the winter the teachers meet in private homes.

A sewing circle was organized January 18, 1918 at the home of John B. Detweiler, near Dublin. The officers were: overseers, Hannah Myers and Ella Wismer; secretary, Sarah Overholt; assistant secretary, Ella Detweiler; treasurer, Sophia Godshalk; choristers, Mary Wismer, Sara High, and Ella Detweiler; cutting committee, Lizzie Rush, Lydia Miller and Annie Myers. The last meeting was held April 8, 1925. Eighty meetings in all were held with a total attendance of 1,892. Each meeting was closed by the

singing of a hymn, the reading of Scripture, and prayer. The offerings lifted totaled \$788. The loss of active workers to Harold Harper's group probably had a bearing upon the discontinuance of the work.

The first Bible instruction meetings were held December 4, 5, 1921 with Bishop John H. Mosemann of Lancaster as instructor. John W. Weaver and Daniel Kauffman conducted similar meetings September 10-12, 1926. On August 30, 31, 1930 John W. Weaver and John W. Hess conducted Bible instruction meetings.

The deacons received \$299 into their alms and maintenance fund in 1930. \$420.02 was raised for missions and \$422.31 for charitable work.

* * * *

Between 1786 and 1801 a few dozen Mennonite families migrated from Bucks county, Pennsylvania to Lincoln county, Ontario, Canada. These families found themselves in need of ordained men. Consequently they wrote to the officials of the Deep Run Church asking them what to do. Bishop Jacob Gross replied in the names of Jacob Gross, Abraham Wismer, Abraham Oberholtzer, John Funk, Rudolph Landis, and Samuel Meyer, instructing them to ordain by voting and the casting of lots. This letter was headed, "Bedminster Taunschip, Bucks Cauntty, Pennsylvanien, den 4. September, 1801." A man named Samuel Meyer had written to Deep Run on behalf of the Ontario Mennonite settlers. Consequently a minister, Valentine Kratz, and a deacon, John Fretz, were ordained.^{4a} Fretz was already more than seventy years of age!

Not all of the above-named Deep Run officials are known. Some of them may have been deacons in the Deep Run "circuit."

* * * *

The Oberholtzer group of 1847 are treated in Part V, Chapter II. In that year about fifty or sixty members withdrew from the Deep Run congregation and erected a new meetinghouse near by. This group adhered to John H. Oberholtzer's Conference.

The church never suffered from a division in leadership. But a little over a decade ago Harold Harper, a man of pleasing personality and an earnest preacher, entered the community and began to hold evangelistic services. He was permitted to preach in the Deep Run Mennonite meetinghouse at least once. He soon gathered a following and built "Grace Gospel Chapel" along the Easton highway, a few miles from the Deep Run meetinghouse.

His tenets seem akin to those of the Plymouth Brethren. He baptizes by immersion, emphasizes justification by faith, and gives more opportunity for lay preaching than most denominations do. Communion is observed quite frequently, perhaps weekly. About fifty Mennonites or Mennonite children united with his group, which also opposes denominationalism. Of course if there is to be any discipline at all, ordinations, etc., there must be

^{4a} L. J. Burkholder, *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, 1935, pp. 30, 43-45; Harold S. Bender, *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature*, Goshen, Indiana, 1929, p. 18.

an organization. And if there is any organization at all it is a sect, regardless of what the name, or absence of a name may be.

Why was Mr. Harper able to win so many Mennonites to his group? For one thing there were a number of dissatisfied members at Deep Run who were displeased because conference made the wearing of a bonnet a test of membership. Part of the cause of Harper's success in winning Deep Run Mennonites is to be found in the pleasing personality of the man and in his vigorous message and part must also be sought in some conditions in the congregation. Deep Run is certainly to be commended for standing on their own feet and building as they deem advisable. In general they have been rather indifferent to the changes made elsewhere. Preacher John Gross wept when English hymns were sung. No corpse was taken into the meetinghouse at funerals until the present century. The whole congregation still remains seated for prayer at funerals. Proposed marriages were publicly announced twice until 1913. These things are harmless in themselves but they indicate a reluctance to change. Perhaps this helped to make some members susceptible to Mr. Harper's message.

Chapter XIX

DOYLESTOWN

Doylestown Township, Bucks County

The early history of the Doylestown congregation is obscure. Perhaps a conjecture can be based on the fact that Bishop A. O. Histan serves communion to three churches, Deep Run, Blooming Glen, and Doylestown,¹ combined with the fact that in 1773 the district comprised Deep Run, Blooming Glen, and "Anfrieds." May the last term not mean "An" (at) Freeds? But where would Freeds' meeting have been? One of the Deep Run trustees in 1746 was John Freed (Hans Friedt). It is possible that Freeds' was an early name for the Mennonite congregation which is now known as Doylestown. Again it may be that it had no connection whatever with Doylestown. "Anfrieds" cannot yet be identified with any degree of certainty.

The historian of the congregation states that the trustees bought seven acres and fifty-six perches of land about one mile north of Doylestown in what was then New Britain township in 1772. But for some unknown reason the deed was not granted until December 5, 1774. David and Sarah Worthington conveyed the land for a consideration of forty-five pounds (which they demanded be paid in English money) to Jacob Rohr and Jacob Haldeman of New Britain township; Ludwig Switzer, weaver, of Warwick township; and Jacob Kulp of Buckingham township.²

For some time the Doylestown Church was known locally as "New Britain." A 1763 *Saur* Bible still lies on the pulpit. The inscription (translated from the German) states, "This Bible belongs to the New Britain Mennonite meetinghouse." And when Bishop Jacob Gross of Deep Run wrote a farewell letter to his congregations on December 7, 1810 he addressed it to ". . . the churches at Deep Run, Perkasio and New Britain"

A little hamlet was first called "Doyle's town" during the Revolutionary War. Prior to that time William Doyle's tavern stood at "the cross roads." Doylestown township was created from New Britain, Buckingham, and Warwick in 1818.

The first house of worship was erected of logs, probably soon after the purchase of the land; Timothy Thut believes that it occurred in 1775 or 1776. In 1808 a new stone meetinghouse was erected, and the old log building was remodeled and used as a house for the sexton. In 1840 an addition, also of stone, was built to the 1808 meetinghouse. In the spring of 1900 a congregational meeting was held to consider plans for enlarging the old

¹ Timothy Thut, historian of the congregation, submitted a splendid historical sketch. The ordained men of the church also were of assistance. See also, William H. W. Davis, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, Revised by Warren S. Ely and John W. Jordan, New York, Chicago, 1905, Volume II, pp. 180, 181.

² Deed at Doylestown, *Book 28*, p. 583.

meetinghouse. The church decided to raze the old structure. Five solicitors met a hearty response in the congregation and soon after the spring communion service the work was begun. The building committee consisted of John B. Detweiler of New Galena, overseer; Aaron Gehman, William Moyer, Abram Gross, and David D. Nyce. Builder and contractor, David D. Nyce, supervised the construction. The new building was erected of pointed stone, one story and a basement, forty-two by sixty-four feet in size, on the site of the previous building, at a cost of \$4,000. Members of the congregation donated a large part of the labor. "The interior walls and woodwork are painted white and the pews yellow pine with hard oil finish." The first service in the new meetinghouse was held on Sunday morning, September 9, 1900.

"It was with feelings of earnest thanksgiving, not unmingled with pride, that the Doylestown congregation resumed its worship after being homeless for some time. Long before the time set for the service, the plainly appointed interior was turned into [a] worshipful place for a large congregation of its members, supplemented by many of other denominations who had come there to witness the ceremony and have a part in it. The house was packed to capacity and standing room was also at a premium.

"There was no formal dedication, but the regular service of the church was conducted. The morning sermon was delivered by Preacher D. L. Gehman in German, using as a text Jno. 4:24, followed by Preacher A. O. Histand in English on the text Heb. 3:4.

"During the summer, while the building was under construction, two funerals were held under the open sky. Namely those of Jacob Gross, the old school teacher and leader in singing in the church; and Sallie G. Gross of Fountainville."³

Before the year 1806 the Doylestown pulpit was supplied from Deep Run; or would it be more accurate to say that it belonged to the Deep Run circuit? The first resident minister, in any case, was John Kephart (1751-1822), a Revolutionary War soldier who had married a Mennonite girl while campaigning in Bucks county, and who had later united with the Doylestown Mennonite Church.⁴ He was ordained in 1806. In June, 1818 Jacob Kulp (1769-1858) was ordained to assist Kephart, but thirteen years later he moved to near Walnut Creek, Ohio. Preacher Abraham Godshalk (1791-1838) was ordained in 1824. John K. Gross (1786-1864) was ordained about 1833. Bishop Isaac Godshalk (1787-1852) was the next preacher. Jacob Histand (1791-1877), who had been ordained at one of the Swamp churches in 1832, moved to Doylestown in 1842 where he preached until his death. Isaac Rickert (1828-1896) was ordained about 1853 and preached until 1895. Samuel G. Gross (1839-1895) was ordained preacher at Doylestown on November 13, 1866 and was ordained bishop at Blooming Glen on November 1, 1883. Preacher David L. Gehman (1852-1932)

³ *Doylestown Intelligencer*, September 10, 1900.

⁴ See his biography in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, April, 1928. The author, Dr. Calvin Ira Kephart, kindly revised the article for the present author.

was ordained on November 14, 1895. A. O. Histan (1869-) was ordained to the ministry at Doylestown on November 11, 1896 and was ordained bishop at Blooming Glen on April 11, 1922. Mahlon Gross (1873-), formerly a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was again ordained to the ministry at Doylestown on May 25, 1920. John E. Leatherman was ordained preacher on December 21, 1933; in 1936 he went to Africa as a missionary under the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. Preacher Joseph L. Gross (1904-) was ordained on December 31, 1935.

The list of deacons is not very long. Probably a number of names are lost. According to tradition there was a Deacon Haldeman at Doylestown. Daniel Gross (1795-1875) was ordained about 1845. John L. Gross (1824-1901) was ordained deacon about 1861. Clayton Bergey (1878-) was ordained deacon on June 5, 1902. In April, 1910 he moved to Fentress, Virginia, and was there ordained to the ministry on September 4, 1922. The present deacon, Abram G. Gross (1870-) was ordained on May 24, 1910.

In 1823 the congregation was granted a charter, the name being, "The trustees of the Mennonist Congregation of Doylestown Township in the Co. of Bucks." The trustees at that time were Abraham Geil, William Godshalk, and Samuel Godshalk. The charter provides for an annual election of trustees on the first Monday in September. Article seven states: the said corporation "shall be able and capable in law, to sue and be sued,"—acts which Mennonites avoid if at all possible.

The first log meetinghouse was converted into a sexton's house in 1808. The present dwelling for the sexton was erected in 1870. The first known sexton was a man named Grier. Later ones are Samuel Leatherman, Henry Lapp, Joseph Lapp, Timothy Thut, Silas Graybill, and Hiram Hunsberger.

One is impressed in studying the Franconia Mennonites with the generous consideration given the sextons. One feels that they get better financial support than the ministers! Doylestown is a pioneer in ministerial support. Taking seriously Paul's statement that the Lord has ordained that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel,"^{4a} the deacon annually raises a sum of money and gives it as Christmas gifts to the ministers. Money is also given at other times as special needs arise.

To the south of the meetinghouse is the cemetery. Some of the old members of the congregation declare they remember an old field stone with the date 1774 cut upon it. Timothy Thut estimates that at least twelve hundred interments have been made. Many have no legible markers; some no markers at all. A decade ago the appearance of the cemetery was not very pleasing. The sexton and the trustees then began to urge the church to make arrangements for the better care of the cemetery. At the annual congregational business meeting held on Labor Day, September 3, 1928, the Board of Trustees appointed five men as the Board of Trustees of the Doylestown Mennonite Burying Ground. The president of the new board was Samuel Gross; secretary, Joseph Lapp; and the remaining members were Edward

^{4a} I Corinthians 9:14.

Chittick, Charles M. Godshalk, and Paul Gross. The cemetery trustees then formulated a set of rules which were approved by the church trustees. Each cemetery trustee serves five years, one trustee being elected each year. Non-members are charged five dollars for the use of the meetinghouse for funerals. Standard charges were established for the digging of graves, maintenance of lots, etc. The congregation approved the rules on May 26, 1929. The maintenance fund of the cemetery now totals \$2,375.00.

On October 17, 1904 the congregation decided by a ballot vote to install lights in the meetinghouse. Evening services did not begin at once, however. The first evening (church) service was held late in the summer of 1906, when a visiting minister preached. The lights were installed principally (at first) to allow the Sunday-school teachers' meetings to be held in the meetinghouse.

Services, as is usual in the Franconia churches, are held every two weeks in the morning and every four weeks in the evening. The first English sermons at Doylestown were occasional sermons soon after 1880 by Samuel Godshalk of Deep Run. Samuel G. Gross (1839-1895) occasionally preached in English. With A. O. Histan's ordination in 1896 English preaching became regular. David L. Gehman (1852-1932) was the last German preacher. But there has been very little German preaching since 1920. Likewise the old practice of "lining" the hymns was discontinued soon after 1920.

Zions Harfe was the first known hymnal. *Philharmonia* and *Pennsylvania Choral Harmony* (both of these books were in German and English) came next. Then followed *Hymns and Tunes, Church and Sunday School Hymnal*, and in 1933 the *Church Hymnal*. Choristers have been Jacob Gross, Jacob Detweiler, Henry Lapp, William Gross, Isaac L. Kulp, Aaron M. Leatherman, Daniel Myers, and Timothy Thut. A recent leader is Millard Detweiler. Singing in parts (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) was introduced before the recollection of the oldest members, probably prior to 1860.

In the latter part of the decade 1870-1880, Jacob Gross, a school teacher, taught a German school for several summers in a schoolhouse then known as the "Eight Square" schoolhouse, which stood about a half mile west of Fountainville. His chief text book was the Bible. Then for a few summers Jacob Gross and Henry Lapp met with the young people on Sunday afternoons in the Doylestown Mennonite meetinghouse and taught them music. The final step was taken in 1882 when a genuine Sunday school was started in the meetinghouse. Some people, at least of other congregations, found fault with the Sunday school because conference was not consulted. But with staunch supporters like Preacher Isaac Rickert, Isaac L. Kulp, David L. Gehman, John Godshalk, school teacher Jacob Gross, and William Gross, the work went ahead. This school was conducted every summer until about 1892. Then, due to some trouble, the work was suspended; but about 1894, through the efforts of Preacher Isaac Rickert and others, the work was revived with Isaac L. Kulp and William Gross as superintendents. That autumn it was decided to continue the school throughout the year,—and it has been maintained ever since.

From about 1882 to 1884 Jacob Gross was superintendent. Then William Gross and Isaac L. Kulp served for several years. William Gross and David L. Gehman then served until the school was discontinued. Upon the reorganization of the Sunday School Isaac L. Kulp and John Godshalk served as superintendents. Written records begin in 1898. The following have served as superintendent and assistant superintendent respectively: Isaac L. Kulp and Isaiah Rickert, 1897, 1898; Isaiah Rickert and Clayton Bergey, 1899-1902; A. M. Leatherman and William Hallman, 1903-1910; William Hallman and Daniel Myers, 1911-1920; Joseph Nyce and Walter S. Bishop, 1921-1927; Joseph Nyce and Paul Histand, 1928; Oliver Nyce and Joseph Nyce, 1929; Oliver Nyce and Wesley Gross, 1930-1932; Oliver Nyce and Clarence Derstine, 1933-1934; Wesley Gross and Jacob Kriebel, 1935-1936.

The International Sunday School lessons were introduced about 1895.

In 1927 the primary department of the Sunday school became a separate organization, having its own officers. The superintendents have been, John C. Myers, 1927; Walter S. Bishop, 1928-1933; Charles Godshalk, 1934-1936.

The Sunday school used, in addition to the church hymnbooks, *Pentecostal Hymns* and *Life Songs*.

Since 1929 the Sunday-school secretary has kept very complete records. It has been considered worth while to include the following very interesting study. May other congregations and schools start similar tabulations.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE DOYLESTOWN MENNONITE SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR 1935

The report for 1935 covers a period of but 50 weeks due to the fact that on April 14th and 21st the church was closed for the purpose of repair and painting. Despite this fact both the attendance and collection for the Sunday School were the highest of which the secretary has record.

The total attendance for 1935 was 12,321. Of this total 7243 were regular members of the senior department, 4301 were members of the primary department and the remainder, or 777, were visitors to our Sunday School. The total collections for the year in the Sunday School were \$698.05, toward which the primary department contributed \$114.50 and the senior department \$583.55. The total average attendance including both departments and visitors was 246 each Sunday with an average collection of \$13.96 each Sunday or of approximately .057 per person. Taking an approximate enrollment of 315 we find that there was an average attendance of enrolled pupils of 231 each Sunday or 74% of the total enrollment.

In the primary department for 1935 we find the highest attendance since this department was organized, 4489 have attended. This is an average of 90 pupils each Sunday. Previous to this year 4108 in 1933 had been high. The attendance of 4489 was 561 more than in 1934

when 3928 attended. Of an approximate enrollment of 109, an average of 86 pupils attended each Sunday or 79% of the total enrollment. This is an improvement over former years when 75% or less attended each Sunday. For the last several years there has been a very pronounced tendency toward a more regular attendance in Sunday School. This is especially true in the primary department where the average has increased 10 points from 69% to 79% in two years. For the corresponding years the senior department has only advanced from 68% to 69%. In 1935 the primary department has 188 visitors as compared to 146 in 1934. The total collection in the primary department was \$114.50. This is an average collection of \$2.29 per Sunday or of .025 cents per person, the same average as in 1934. The primary department also sent toward the support of missionary children the sum of \$95.67 of which \$82.88 came through tithing boxes distributed to the primary department and \$12.79 from birthday pennies. This is \$4.14 more than last year when \$91.53 was given.

For the fifth consecutive year the senior department has shown an increase in attendance. This increase began in 1931 when 6913 attended to 7832 in 1935 which means that we have an average of 17 more persons attending each Sunday of 1935 than in 1931. The average attendance was 157 per Sunday as compared to 143 in 1934. With an enrollment of about 211, 145 or 69% attended each Sunday. The attendance record this year seems to show no improvement over the last year's record. During the year 589 visitors attended Sunday School compared to 636 in 1934 or 47 fewer visitors. The average number of visitors each Sunday was 12. The total collections in the senior department were \$583.55, an average of \$11.67 each Sunday or of .075 per person. This year's collection was \$58.00 more than 1934.

Beside the regular collections, the Sunday School gave toward the support of the African Mission \$105.18 and toward the support of Sister Esther Vogt \$105.18. This is a total of \$210.36 and was received in the regular mission collection held every two weeks. Beside this sum there was given to the secretary special donations for the African Mission of \$56.00 and to Sister Vogt \$22.00. This made a total of \$183.18 to the African Mission and of \$127.18 to Sister Vogt. It is interesting to note that this Sunday School gave definitely to the support of missions, both home and foreign, to the amount of \$545.35. This includes the quarterly collections, two special collections to E. M. S. tuition fund and to the Washington, D. C. mission, and the primary and senior mission support. The total collections in the Sunday School for all purposes for 1935 were \$1096.58 or \$156.95 higher than in 1934.

In 1914 the first all-day Sunday-school meeting was held at the Doylestown Mennonite Church. Annual Sunday-school meetings were held until 1932.

It should also be mentioned that a number of workers of this Sunday school assisted in a union Sunday school conducted in the Fountainville Chapel for several years prior to 1920.

About 1915 a young people's meeting was organized and it has prospered since the beginning. Meetings are held every second Sunday in the evening (with the evening church service on another Sunday there is thus only one Sunday evening in four in which the meetinghouse is idle). A committee prepares programs and appoints leaders—different leaders for each meeting. The committee serves for one year. Usually the topics prepared by the Young People's Meeting Topics Committee of the church (General Conference—but not the General Conference Mennonites) are used. Adults and children of various ages are used on the programs.

Bible study meetings have been held during the winter months for a number of years, J. David Nyce being the present leader.

Sewing circle work was started in the summer of 1908. Lydia Gross and Mattie Detweiler learned of clothing needs so they drove a team to the home of Preacher A. O. Histan and asked permission to start sewing circle work. He was very enthusiastic about the proposed work and made public announcement of the plan. Several barrels of clothing were donated to the group. Thus the good work was started. Written records are available since 1928. In 1930 the offerings of the circle totaled \$90.49; the young people's meeting donated \$50.00. \$82.34 was expended for materials and the circle sent \$36.06 to the Mennonite missions in India and South America. The combined attendance for the year was 181. The circle completed two hundred thirty-four garments, three quilts, and fourteen comforters. These garments and comforters were given to the Norristown Mennonite Mission, Eastern Mennonite Home of Souderton, Tampa (Fla.) Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Missions abroad, the Reading Mennonite Mission, and Christ Home at Warminster, Pennsylvania.

The Doylestown Mennonite Church was also a pioneer congregation in the Franconia Conference in evangelism. (Combined) evangelistic and Bible instruction meetings have been held every other year since 1909. The Bible instruction meetings of 1909 were planned without the permission of conference. Because they were an innovation the ordained men at Doylestown had to make an acknowledgment to conference. Whereupon conference permitted them to hold their meeting "for this one time." But at the following meeting of conference, May, 1910, the Vincent congregation also received permission for such special meetings and in the course of time they were held throughout the district.

The Mennonites of A. O. Histan's district conduct services at the Bucks County Home for the Aged and at the County Prison four times a year, on the fifth Sunday of those months having five Sundays.

The present ministers are actively in favor of mission work and the fruit is evident. J. D. Mininger and wife held their membership at Doylestown just prior to being called to Ohio for church work. Catharine B. Kulp worked at the Los Angeles Mennonite Mission for several years. Rebecca Histan Graybill worked for some time at the Reading Mennonite Mission. Esther Histan is now working at the Mennonite Mission at Cottage City, Maryland (near Washington, D. C.). Ruth Histan Mosemann sailed with her husband, John, for the African field on February 22, 1934. John E.

Leatherman, ordained to the ministry at Doylestown, also sailed, with his wife Catharine Garber Leatherman, for Africa on April 8, 1936. (See his biography on pages 279, 280).

The congregation now has a membership of two hundred sixty-five. And with the policies of the present leaders it will certainly grow. One of the surest signs of growth is the giving of sons and daughters to the mission field. For the congregation that thus loses its members shall save its life.

Chapter XX

PLUMSTEAD or GROVELAND

Plumstead Township, Bucks County

Plumstead is a branch of the Deep Run congregation. Those who attend regularly are members of the Deep Run and Doylestown churches. No communion is observed in the Plumstead meetinghouse. The meetinghouse was originally built for the convenience of the Deep Run members of the community. But with the advent of the automobile one cannot but ask why the services are continued. There are a number of old people who have come to regard Plumstead as their church and who would feel wounded in spirit if the building were closed.

A county history says, "A Mennonite meeting-house stands on the Black's Eddy road, a mile southwest of Hinkletown, where a branch of the Deep Run congregation assembles for worship once a month The first house, stone, twenty-four by twenty-seven feet, was erected in 1806, on an acre of land given by Henry Wismer and wife. It was enlarged in 1832 [to the size] twenty-seven by forty-three feet. It was occupied by English and German schools for twenty-five years. The graveyard is free to all outside the congregation who wish to bury there, and the remains of several unknown drowned are lying in it."¹ The meetinghouse was rebuilt, also of stone (plastered) in 1886 at a cost of \$1,445.00. The dimensions are now thirty by forty-eight feet.

Services were held every fourth Sunday in the morning until recent years. About the year 1917 church services began to be held every four weeks in the evening. These Sunday evening services are discontinued for about three months during each winter, from about Christmas until after the spring communion service at Deep Run. The pulpit for the Sunday morning service is supplied by a minister from one of three congregations, Deep Run, Doylestown, or Blooming Glen. The Deep Run ministers usually preach at the evening services.

Since those who attend the Sunday morning service every four weeks were always deprived of attending Sunday school that morning, it was finally decided to conduct a Sunday school at Plumstead every four weeks. This Sunday school was begun about 1927. John M. Myers of Danboro is the first and only superintendent; he was appointed by the "small conference" (kleine Rath) of the Deep Run bishop district which convenes annually on the third Monday in March.

A group of twenty interested Mennonite sisters met at the home of John M. Myers on December 19, 1918 to discuss the organization of a Plum-

¹ William H. W. Davis, *History of Bucks County Pennsylvania* (1876), revised by Ely and Jordan, New York, Chicago, 1905, Volume I, p. 389.

The late Deacon John L. Derstine, H. Harrison Yothers, and others were of assistance in gathering the data of this brief chapter.

stead Mennonite Sewing Circle. Actual organization was deferred until January 29, 1919. On the latter date the following officers were elected, superintendent, Annie Meyers; assistant superintendent, Ella Myers; secretary, Bessie Leatherman; treasurer, Elsie Myers. At the close of each meeting a devotional service, singing, Bible reading, and prayer, was held. The organization did a very creditable work, but disbanded in April, 1925. Whether the loss of members occasioned by the work of Harold Harper had any connection with the close of the Plumstead Sewing Circle work, is not clear.

A list of trustees is available since 1859. In that year three brethren were elected for one year, Abram Nash, Henry W. Funk, and Elias Fretz. They were re-elected for one year in 1860. In 1863 the arrangement was changed; Elias Fretz was elected for three years, Samuel Myers for two years, and Henry F. Myers for one year. The same men were often re-elected: Henry F. Myers 1863-1869; Elias Fretz 1859-1868. Henry F. Myers was again serving in 1871 and was re-elected in 1874, 1877, 1880, 1883, 1886, and 1890. In 1869 Joseph Leatherman was elected for three years; he was re-elected in 1872 and 1875. In 1870 Jacob L. Shattinger was elected; he was re-elected in 1873. Charles Shelly was elected for one year in 1875; he was re-elected for three years in 1876, 1879, 1883, 1886, 1890, 1892, 1896, and 1900. David B. Myers was elected for a three-year term in 1878; he was re-elected in 1883, 1886, and 1890. Samuel Shad-dinger was elected in 1892 and re-elected in 1896, 1900, and 1908. John Myers was elected for a three-year term in 1892. In 1896 Oliver Myers was elected for a three-year term and re-elected in 1900, 1908, 1920, and 1930. Pearson Wolfinger was elected in 1908 and was re-elected in 1920. In 1920 Newberry Trauger was elected and has served since, having been re-elected in 1930. Samuel C. Myers was elected in 1930. Evidently Plumstead is gravitating toward the system in use in some congregations—electing trustees for life.

Henry Harwick was appointed sexton in 1859, and served until 1876 at \$5.00 per year. From 1876 to 1908 Jeremiah Kriebel was sexton and received \$5.00 a year until 1892 when his salary was raised to \$8.00. Francis M. Swope served from 1908 to 1928; he received \$8.00 per year until 1917 when lights were installed for evening services. His pay was then raised to \$15.00. In 1928 Samuel M. Rice became sexton and received a dollar for each meeting. About 1930 Samuel S. Gehman succeeded him and receives the same remuneration.

The attendance averages a hundred or less.

As is so often the case in the Franconia Conference a schoolhouse stands near the meetinghouse. The school is not as old as the meetinghouse. It was named Groveland and the meetinghouse has also received the name in recent years. A union Sunday school has been conducted in the Groveland schoolhouse every Sunday afternoon during the summer months for about forty years.

Chapter XXI

PERKASIE

Fourth and Chestnut Streets, Perkasio, Bucks County

The most active man in arousing sentiment for the erection of a Mennonite meetinghouse in Perkasio was William M. Moyer. On January 18, 1909 there was a meeting of interested Mennonites at his home. The following were present: Bishop H. B. Rosenberger, Preacher Peter B. Loux, Preacher Frank Swartz (all of the Blooming Glen Church), William M. and Florence Moyer, Peter L. Moyer, M. B. Moyer, Jacob H. Myers, David Hedrick, Jacob M. Moyer, L. D. Hunsicker, Martin Overholt, William Lapp, John Rosenberger, A. H. Freed, John M. Overholt, Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Moyer, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Hunsicker, A. M. Yeackel, J. L. Detweiler, Tyrus Moyer, and Dr. D. M. Landis. The group decided to build.

Amandus A. Bissey conveyed the present site, sixty-five by one hundred thirty-two feet, to the trustees, William M. Moyer, A. M. Hunsicker, and Jacob H. Myers, for seven hundred dollars. The deed was granted on January 30, 1909. J. B. Delp of Souderton submitted the lowest bid. He erected the present brick meetinghouse, thirty-six by fifty feet, for \$3,296.00. (This cost is exclusive of benches, pulpit, heater, and electrical equipment). The trustees constituted the building committee.

Morning and evening services were conducted on the opening Sunday, August 8, 1909, Bishop A. S. Mack preaching at the evening service. The following Sunday the Perkasio Mennonite Sunday School was organized. The superintendency was in the hands of William Moyer and Titus Moyer for twenty years, sometimes one being assistant, sometimes the other. The Sunday school meets every Sunday afternoon.

More recent superintendents have been Quintus Leatherman, Roy Wenger (now a deacon at Fentress, Virginia), Abram D. Yoder (now a preacher in the Swamp congregation), John E. Wenger (now located at Des Allemands, Louisiana), Wilmer E. Landis, and William A. Moyer.

In December, 1914 a young people's meeting was organized. It meets every four weeks on Sunday evening. For about fifteen years William M. Moyer assumed the general oversight of the meeting, appointed leaders for the junior and senior programs, etc. Titus Moyer then took charge. The appointed leaders planned programs for the meetings. In 1935 a committee of three was appointed to prepare a program for each meeting. This group consists of Isaac G. Rosenberger, Ephraim L. Gehman, and Wilmer E. Landis. The young people's meeting is attended by young people from many congregations, so that an "overflow-meeting" in the basement is often necessary.

The "Blooming Glen and Perkasio Mennonite Sewing Circle" was organized on March 13, 1915 at the home of William M. Moyer in Perkasio.

There has never been a Perkasio congregation; it is a branch of Blooming Glen. And yet Bishop Henry B. Rosenberger did baptize a class of five applicants at Perkasio on May 14, 1911. The group consisted of Verda Musselman, Laura Lapp, Melvin Musselman, Allen H. Detweiler, and William Hunsicker.

Deacon Norman M. Moyer of the Blooming Glen congregation takes care of supplying the pulpit. Ministers from various parts of the conference preach at Perkasio. Services have been conducted every four weeks in the evening, and since the summer of 1936 every four weeks in the afternoon following the Sunday-school period. Thus there is now preaching at Perkasio every two weeks.

The trustees in 1909 were William M. Moyer, A. M. Hunsicker, and Jacob H. Myers. In 1911 Hunsicker died and was succeeded by A. H. Freed. In 1930 Tyrus Moyer relieved Jacob H. Myers, now aged ninety-three. The present trustees are thus William M. Moyer, A. H. Freed, and Tyrus Moyer.

Perkasio is filling a large place in the life of the Mennonites in the eastern part of the Franconia Conference. William M. Moyer is very active in supporting mission work. In 1920 the "congregation" began systematic giving to the India Mission. The Perkasio Mennonites contribute to the support of George J. Lapp.

Chapter XXII

COVENTRY

East Coventry Township, Chester County

Coventry is the oldest Mennonite congregation in Chester county, and it was long the largest.¹ But the first meetinghouse was not erected at the same place as the present building. The original site is reached as follows. If one starts from the present Coventry meetinghouse and goes east on the Schuylkill road, he will come to the first road leading off to the right at "Savage's corner." Here he takes the road to the right and travels south on it, passes by a well-traveled road which leads off to the left, and shortly arrives at the spot where "Hollowbush's school house" used to stand. This is the site of the original Coventry meetinghouse; it is about one mile "as the crow flies" southeast of the present Coventry meetinghouse. The tract on which the original meetinghouse stood is now owned by Samuel Rinewalt.

Preacher Hans Jacob Bechtel settled a few miles north of the present borough of Pottstown by 1720. Hans Switzer settled in the Coventry community by 1739. Henry Wanger was within the present borders of Pottstown already in 1718. Jacob Schantz came to the same community about 1737. It is very probable that religious services were conducted in private homes prior to the erection of the first meetinghouse. On June 27, 1751 Andrew Hight and his wife, Magdalena (Engers), conveyed two acres of land to Daniel Longenecker, Martin Beigle (Bechtel), Jacob High alias Hoch, Casper Acre, Johannes Buckwalter, and Jacob Engers.² The deed did not specify the purpose for which the land was intended; but on June 29, 1751 Daniel Longacre, Martin Bechtel, and Jacob High of Philadelphia county and Casper Acre, Johannes Buckwalter, and Jacob Engers of Chester county issued a declaration of trust stating that the land was given to them in trust for the people commonly called Mennonites, "alias Menister," for a burying ground and for the uses of the society forever.^{2a} The first meetinghouse was evidently erected soon thereafter. A note in the records of the Schantz family^{2b} states that in 1753 Jacob Schantz contributed fifteen shillings for the erection of the meetinghouse. As was stated before, this land is now owned by Mr. Samuel Rinewalt. Almost all of this two-acre tract was sold after the erection of the 1798 building at the present location. Abraham Brower on February 22, 1802 conveyed one acre and eighty-nine perches to Peter Pfoutz. The deed recites: "Whereas Andrew Hight et

¹ For much information regarding the Mennonite Churches of Chester county the author is indebted to Mr. Geo. F. P. Wanger, 1122 Queen Street, Pottstown, Pa. Mr. Wanger is the author of *A Genealogy of the Descendants of Rev. Jacob Price*, Harrisburg, Pa., 1926.

² West Chester *Deed Book*, P-15-335.

^{2a} West Chester *Deed Book*, 02-38-13.

^{2b} According to Mr. Geo. F. P. Wanger, 1122 Queen Street, Pottstown, Pa.

Magdalena et ux by their indenture dated 27 June 1751, granted and conveyed to David Longaker, Martin Beigle, Jacob Engers and Casper Acker, two acres in Coventry twp for a meeting place . . . for the religious Society called Menonists and whereas the said Society for their better and more convenient accomodation have purchased other land wheron we [they] have erected a Meeting House and having agreed among themselves to sell a part of the aforesaid, by a certain instrument of writing dated Jan. 15 last past did authorise and empower the above named Abraham Brower, party hereto, to sell and convey the same . . . for [the sum of] 19 pounds, ten shillings . . . ”³ Nothing visible remains to indicate the exact original location of this first Coventry meetinghouse.

The second Coventry meetinghouse, of which mention is made in the 1802 deed, was erected at the present location in 1798.⁴ On May 4 of that year Jacob Stager and wife for a consideration of thirteen pounds granted one acre of land to John High and Abraham Brower of Coventry, and Isaac Schantz of New Hanover, “Elders of the Mennonist Society” and to their successors. If this terminology is correct these three men must have been ordained officials. John High is known to have been a preacher. Isaac Schantz was connected with the finances of building the meetinghouse. It is possible that he was a deacon. He died in 1802. Nothing is known of Brower.

The book in which the meetinghouse accounts were recorded has fortunately been preserved.^{4a} The book is entitled, “Book of the Meetinghouse Accounts which we settled 23th of November 1799.” On the back of the book is written, “the Whole amount of the Expences of the Building of the Meetinghouse in Coventry township Chester County was found to be 380 £ 4s 5d.” The men who seem to be responsible for the finances are Isaac Schantz, Abraham Brower, John High, John Sowder, Christian Bleam, and Jacob Ecker. Other names found in the accounts are John High, ——— Shaffer, John Shoemaker, ——— Nickelson, Jacob Schantz, Peter Roadarmel, Jacob Bunn, Benjn Missemar, George Leonard, Daniel Beary, John Lightner, George Savage, Jacob Stager, and Peter Poutz. Perhaps some of these names are of non-Mennonite laborers whom the congregation employed. The final audit was made a few years later. “February the 26th 1803 Then Lookd over or Ballanced the Accounts of the Subscriptions and Expenditures of the Meetinghouse in Coventry township, Chester County and found a ballance Due to the Estate of Isaac Shantz the sum of 5-5-1 and to Jacob Ecker the sum of 3-5-0 and to John High the sum of 5-3-4 which amounts in the whole to 13-13-5.

“Settlement made by Henry Pannebecker⁵ and Jacob Ecker
“Des obigr isz bezahlt.” (The above is paid).

³ Deed at West Chester, Pa., *Deed Bk.* V2-44-p. 247.

⁴ Daniel K. Cassel thought the date in the stone in the building was 1728, and inserted his error into his histories. Others have failed to discover his mistake.

^{4a} The following data was furnished by Mr. Geo. F. P. Wanger.

⁵ In 1796 there was a Preacher Henry Pannebecker scheduled to visit the German-town meetinghouse and preach there on January 1, 1797. Probably the Coventry auditor was the Mennonite preacher.

On April 13, 1804 Jacob Stager and wife and John Baugh and Catharine, his wife, conveyed eighty perches adjoining the 1798 tract to John High and Jacob Ecker in trust. They granted these eighty perches for a consideration of five shillings and in "consideration of the love and affection which they have unto the Mennonist society and for other good causes and considerations." This additional land was evidently used for burial purposes. When Peter Stager later (April 1, 1812) sold about thirty-nine acres of land from which these two tracts were taken, the deed makes mention of them, "Saving and excepting out of this grant forever two certain tracts or parcels of land being contiguous and adjoining each other, containing by estimation one and one quarter acres which the said above named Jacob Stager has heretofore conveyed to the religious society of Mennonists in Coventry township forever for a place of Divine worship and for a burying ground for the interment of their dead."⁶

Where did the Coventry Mennonites bury their dead prior to 1798? Were it not for some good local historians considerable research might be necessary. The answer is, in the Sprogel Burying Ground. John Henry Sprogel originally bought the "Manatawny tract" of over twenty-thousand acres from Penn. The tract was named New Hanover in honor of the native town of the purchaser. Some time prior to 1715 Sprogel set aside about three acres within the present borough of Pottstown for burial purposes. The first known interment was his son, Frederick, in 1716. Mennonite names such as Grubb, Bechtel, Rhodes, Schantz, Reiff, and High were on the markers in the Sprogel cemetery. Bishop Martin Bechtel was buried there in 1786. It is very probable that after the Coventry Mennonite cemetery was opened the number of Mennonite burials in Sprogel's cemetery gradually decreased and finally ceased altogether.

A chain of trustees of the Sprogel cemetery was maintained for a long time. The minute book of the trustees of "Sprogel's Burying Ground at Green Point Ford" has been preserved.⁷ Trustee meetings are recorded in this book at irregular intervals from 1811 to 1885. Some typical names (of trustees) are Bliem, Ortlip, Linderman, Bean, Gabel, Bechtel, Bartold, Coryell, and Mensch. On March 30, 1868 Jacob E. Bleim, Christian H. Bleim, Abraham Mensch, Jesse Bechtel, John H. Bleim, John E. Bleim, Henry C. Gabel, Jacob G. Gabel, and their successors were constituted a body corporate by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania "to manage and improve the Sprogle Burial Ground, situate on the east side of the Schuylkill river, and near the South line of the borough of Pottstown" The said Board also was granted the privilege to ". . . erect a place of worship with a dwelling thereon, at which place funeral services may be performed and worship be held by the Menonist persuasion" But no meetinghouse was erected. Gradually the cemetery was abandoned. In the decade 1880-1890 Mr. Geo. F. P. Wanger took a photo of the entrance to the ancient burying ground the use of which he has kindly granted to us for this book. By 1905 the cemetery was hemmed in as follows: "The improve-

⁶ Deed at West Chester, *Bk.* G3-55-156.

⁷ This data was also furnished by Mr. Geo. F. P. Wanger.

ments of the Glasgow Iron Company are on one side, the Philadelphia Bridge works bound the north side and a foundry building is located on the third side. The Pennsylvania Railroad crosses that part of the tract not used for burials. Sidings and switches enter the various manufacturing plants on two sides of the burial ground." Legal action was then instigated to sell the historic cemetery. The case dragged through the courts for about a year. On November 1, 1905 Judge A. S. Swartz handed down a decree permitting the sale in spite of the opposition of interested people. About sixty bodies were disinterred, most of them being removed to a new half-acre burial lot on Hanover Avenue, and the remaining ones were buried in various cemeteries selected by relatives. Thus industrialism moved the dead from their graves. The historic burial acre was no more.

According to the older members of the Vincent congregation Coventry was at one time a thriving congregation. Henry S. Bower (1836-1909) was baptized in a class of thirty at Coventry. Of course it is possible that if Vincent and Coventry were served by the same preachers and deacons that some of that baptismal class really were of Vincent families. In 1890 Vincent had about sixty members and Coventry about twenty. In that year the Coventry meetinghouse was rebuilt. It is still standing.

A Sunday school was organized in the Coventry meetinghouse in the spring of 1882. It was conducted as a union Sunday school by Coventry Mennonites and members of a neighboring congregation of the Church of the Brethren (Dunkards). The leading men in the Sunday school were Jonathan Kulp of Coventry and Henry Stauffer of the Brethren Church. But the young people continued to unite with other denominations, chiefly the Church of the Brethren. Finally a Mennonite deacon reprimanded the Sunday-school superintendent for taking part of the time which was needed for the church service. The Sunday school was then discontinued in the Coventry meetinghouse and started anew in the meetinghouse of the Church of the Brethren. The Coventry congregation then declined to a few members. On May 27, 1911 a class of two girls, Grace Halteman and Esther K. Bechtel, was baptized. This was the last class received into the church at Coventry. In 1914 a final effort was made to revive the work. George R. Brunk of Denbigh, Virginia, was engaged to conduct a series of evangelistic services. One girl, Naomi Bechtel, accepted Christ. She was baptized at the Vincent meetinghouse and services were discontinued at Coventry. The attempt at revival had been a failure.

But some people had become active before the last Mennonite services were held. The Brethren had no cemetery adjoining their meetinghouse so they had been burying their dead in the Coventry Mennonite burying ground. The Brethren people then asked the Mennonites to co-operate with them in organizing to repair the cemetery. At first the Mennonites refused, then yielded. On January 5, 1910 a board of five members received a charter; they allowed the Mennonites to have at least two representatives on the Board. The organization is called, "East Coventry Mennonite Cemetery." At once the trustees conducted a drive for funds. \$3,750.00 in cash and \$860.00 in endowment notes was received. \$3,000 was placed in trust, the interest thereof to be used for the continual upkeep of the cemetery. They

also spent about \$650 in removing foot stones and grading the cemetery. In 1912 almost a thousand dollars was raised and expended for new wall, gates, and driveway. In 1928 the trustees removed the sheds and built a concrete tool house. In 1932 the Board members (now all non-Mennonites, the Mennonite members having died) held a trust fund of \$5,600.00, investments of \$1,000.00 etc. They are also making charges for burial lots, a practice unknown to Franconia Mennonites.

More land was added to the original Coventry burial lot (1798) in 1804, 1870, 1910, and 1931.

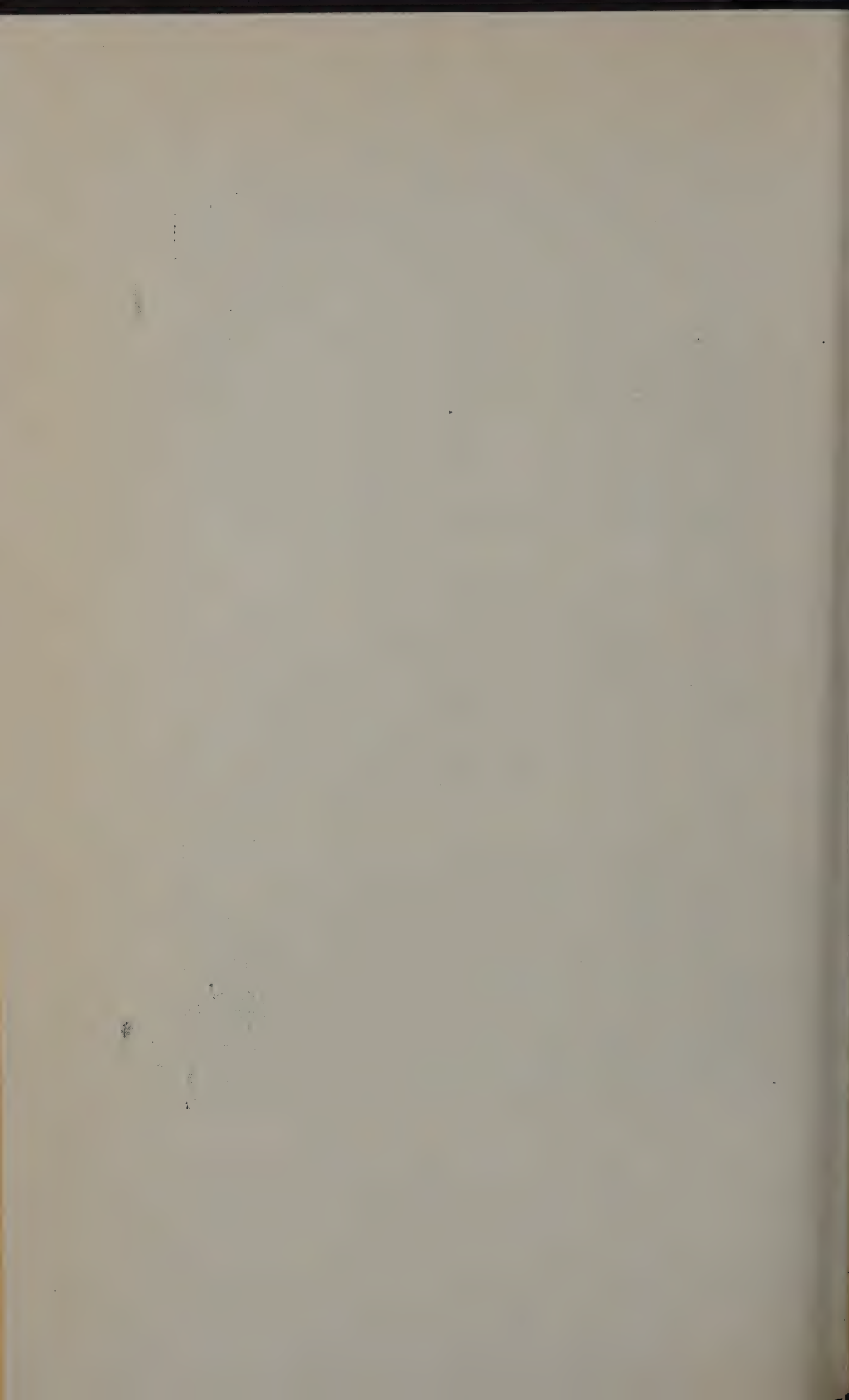
What could have been done to save the Coventry congregation? No one can positively give an answer. The union Sunday school probably was a mistake. Chester county was English-speaking when the great part of the conference was still German. Perhaps the German was retained too long in the services. And finally it does seem that American Mennonitism has thrived well only in colonies; outlying congregations tended to become extinct. The tendency is for outlying churches to become less distinctly Mennonite. As a matter of observation it would appear that the weaker the congregation is numerically, the more accentuated must its separation be from the stream of life in the community if its identity is to be maintained. Otherwise it will constantly lose to larger groups.

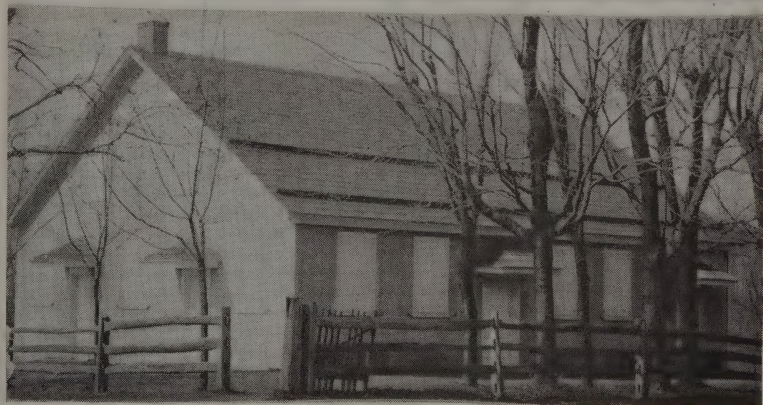


Boyertown Meetinghouse, Built 1879-1883

Hereford Meetinghouse, Built 1899

Hereford Meetinghouse, Built 1755; Enlarged 1790; Razed 1899

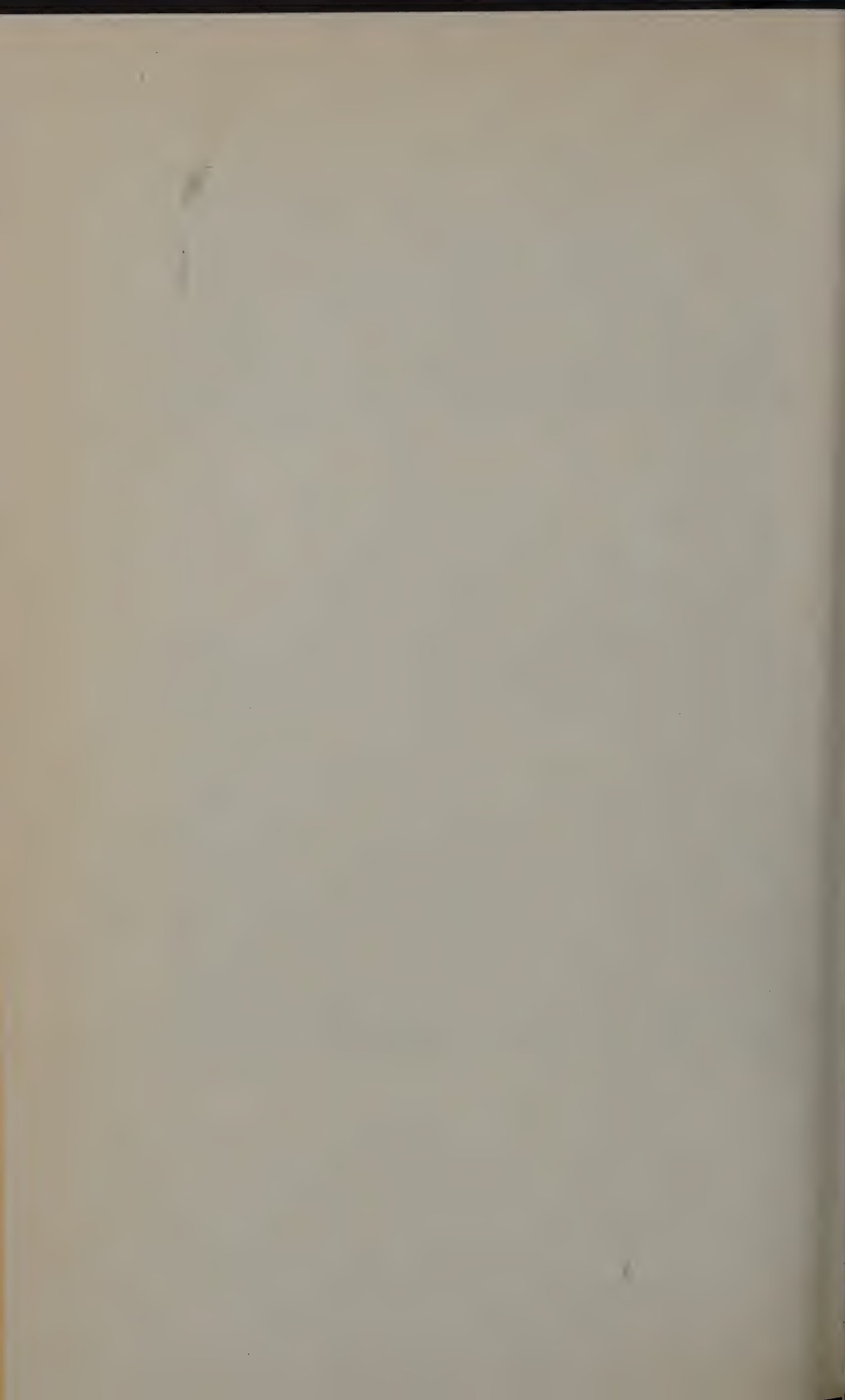




Swamp Meetinghouse, Built 1847

Towamencin Meetinghouse, Built 1925

Towamencin Meetinghouse, Built 1862; Razed 1925





Salford Meetinghouse, Built 1924

Rockhill Meetinghouse, Built 1925

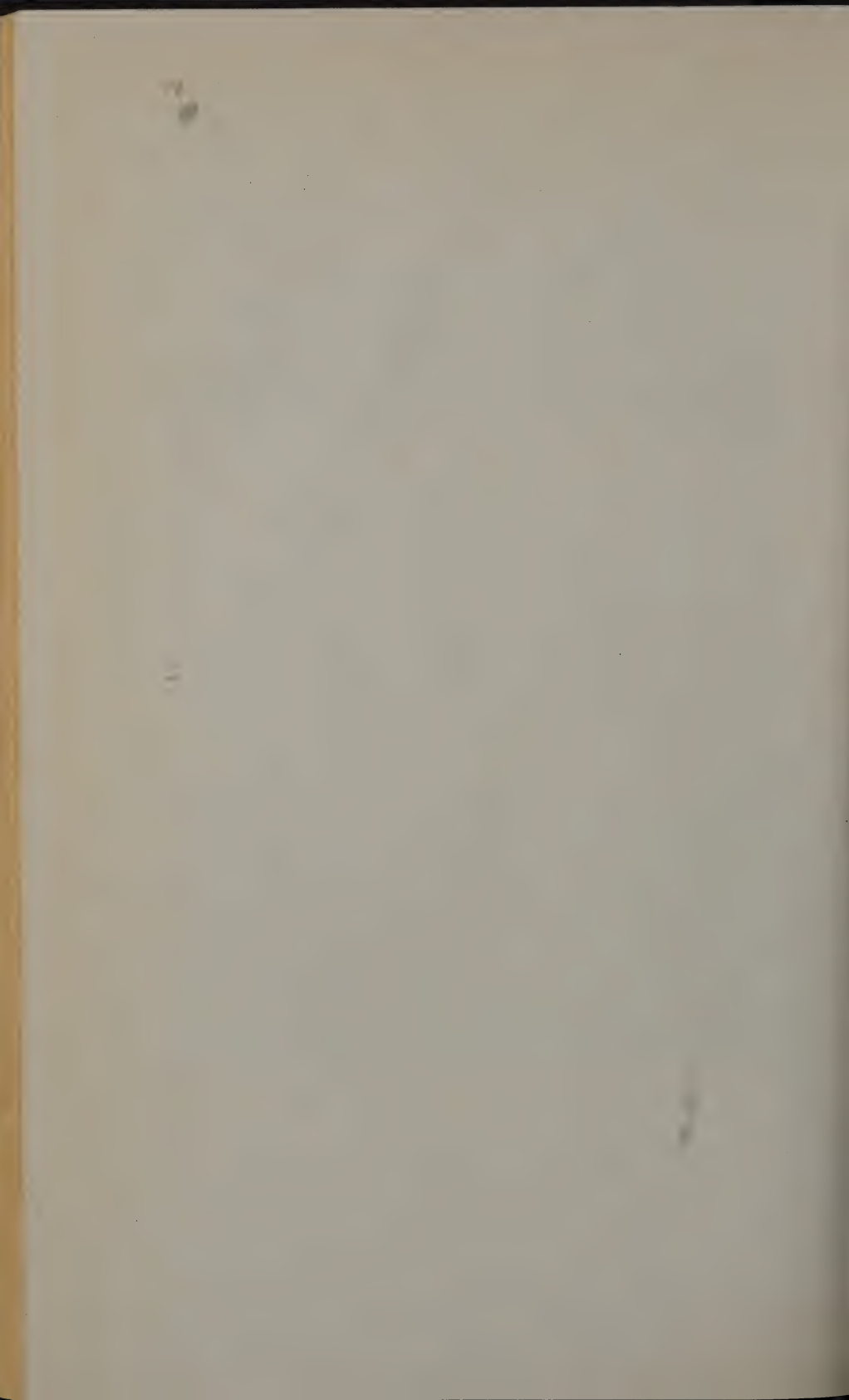
Rockhill Meetinghouse, Built 1838; Razed 1925

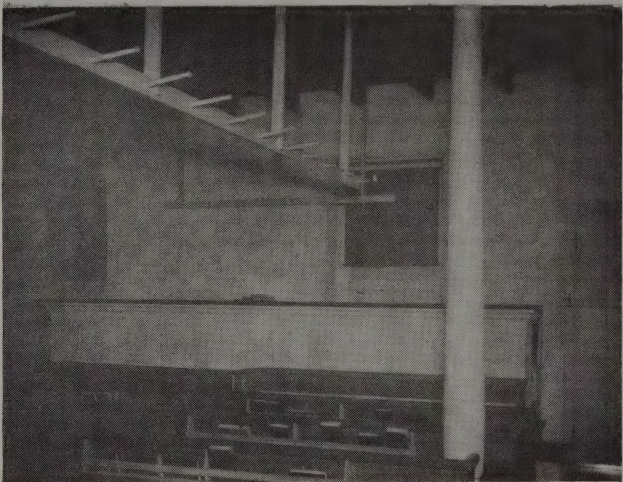


Franconia Meetinghouse, Built 1892; Enlarged 1917

Souderton Meetinghouse, Built 1915

Souderton Meetinghouse, Built 1879; Enlarged 1897; Razed 1915



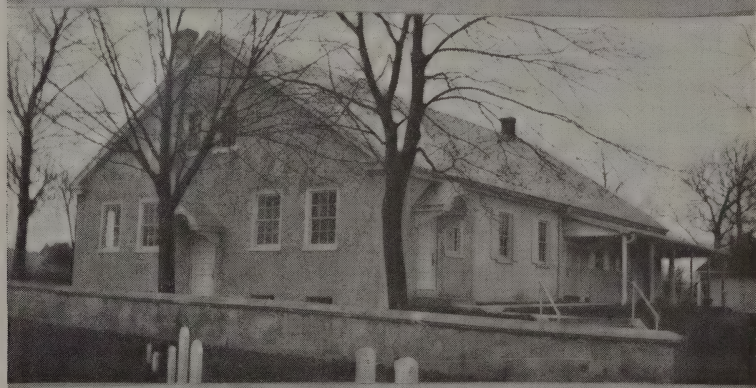


Plain Meetinghouse, Built 1922

Plain Meetinghouse, Built 1867; Razed 1922

Interior of the Doylestown Meetinghouse, 1808-1900

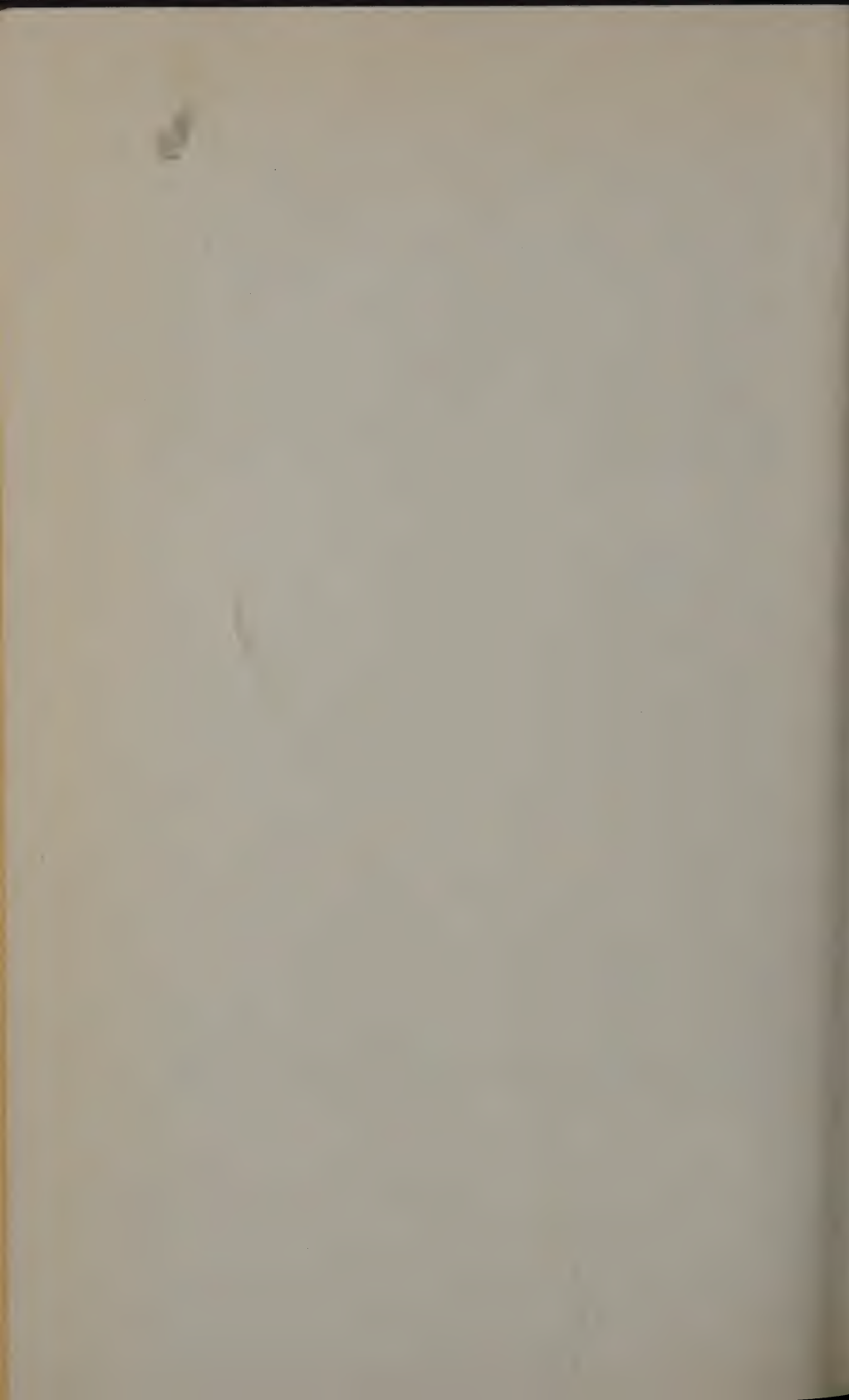
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Blooming Glen Meetinghouse, Built 1882; Enlarged 1925

Lexington Meetinghouse, Built 1868; Enlarged 1935

Perkasic Meetinghouse, Built 1909

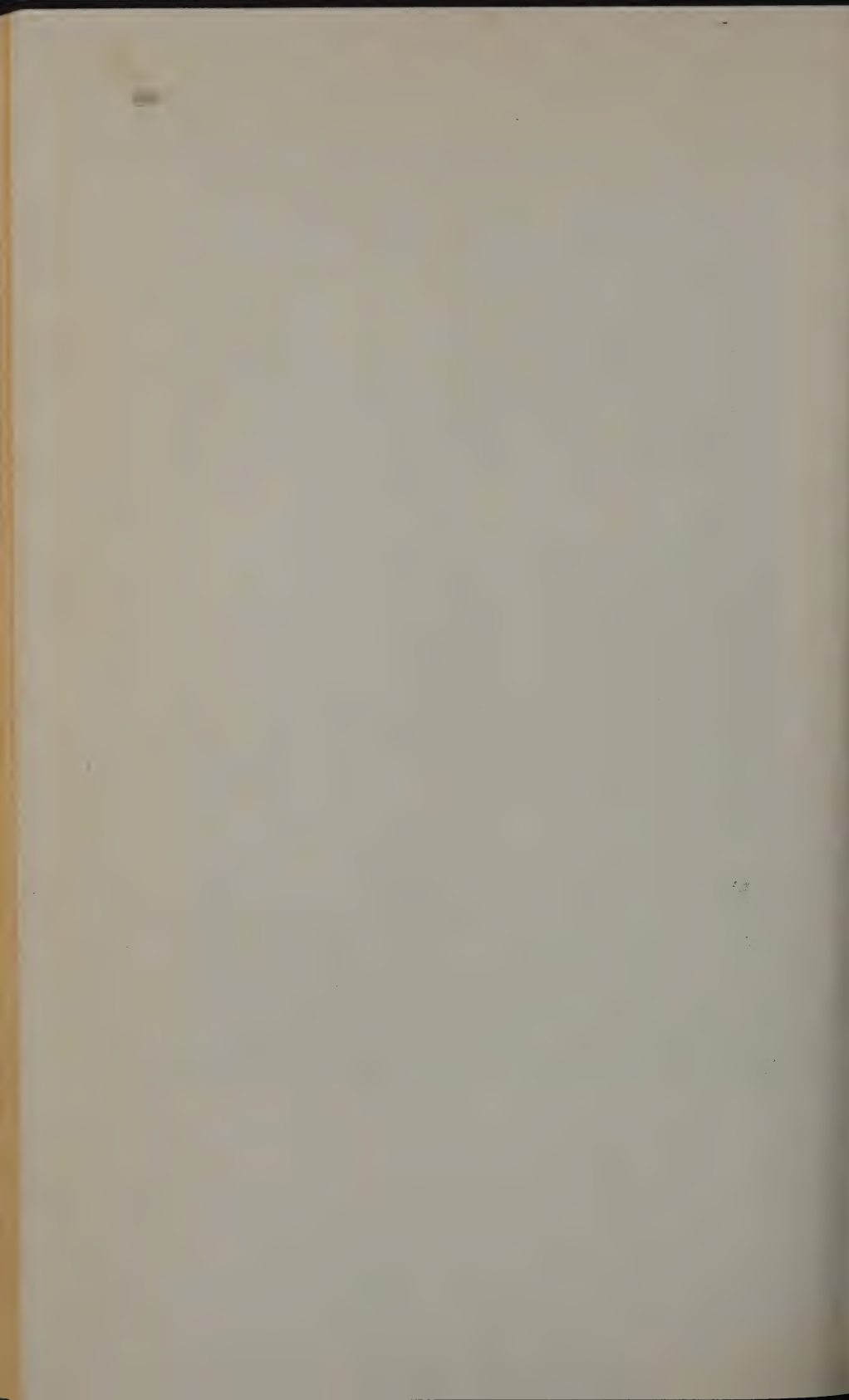




Sketch of the Deep Run Meetinghouse, Built 1766 ; Enlarged 1795 ;
Razed 1872

Deep Run Meetinghouse, Built 1872

Plumstead Meetinghouse, Built 1886

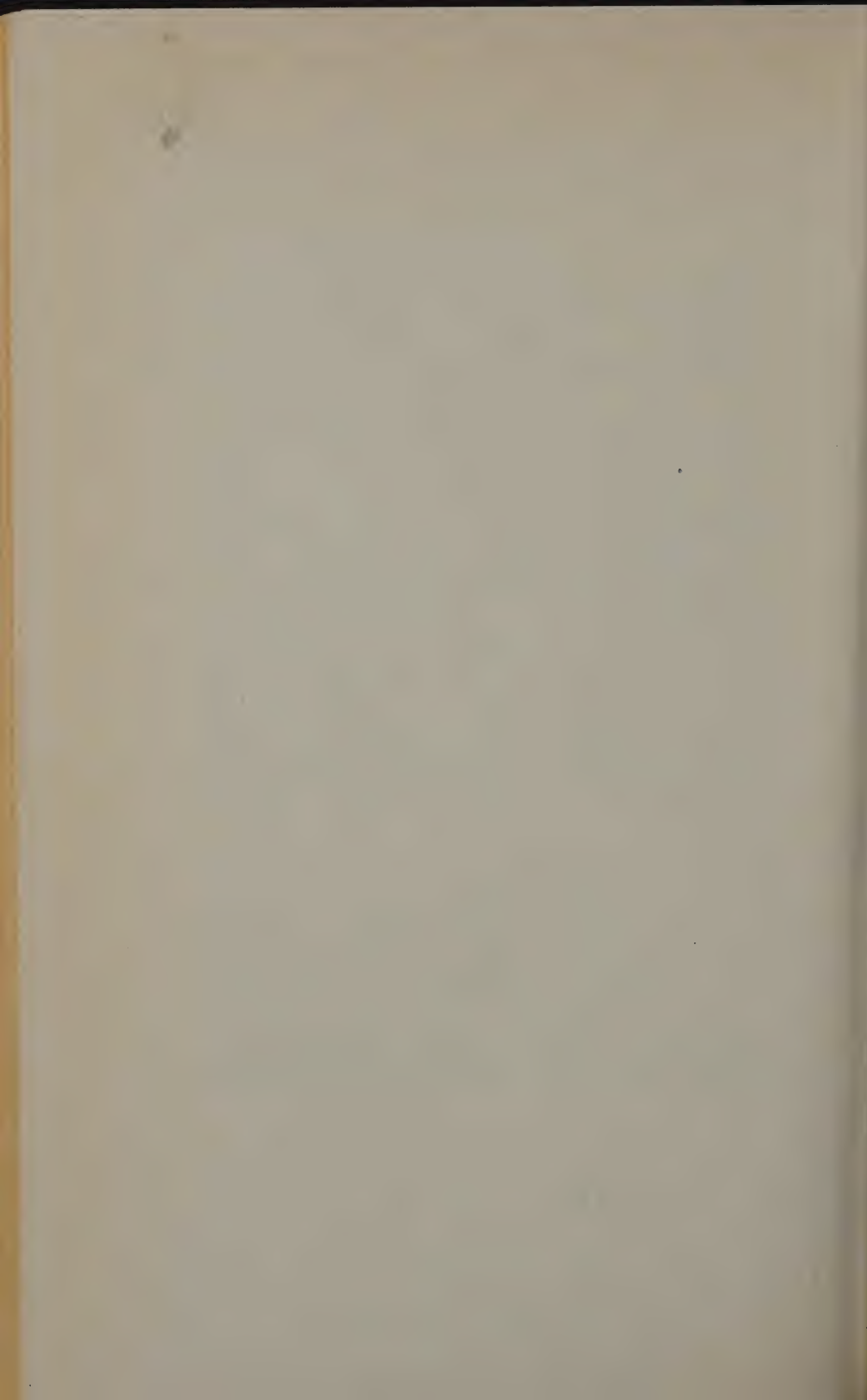




Old Schoolhouse at Deep Run

Doylestown Meetinghouse, Built 1808; Enlarged 1840; Razed 1900

Doylestown Meetinghouse, Erected 1900



Chapter XXIII

CHARLESTOWN

Charlestown Township, Chester County

The history of the Charlestown Mennonite congregation is somewhat obscure, but some facts are definitely known. The founder of the congregation was Bishop Matthias Pennypacker (1742-1808). The late Governor of Pennsylvania, Samuel W. Pennypacker wrote, "My own great-grandfather, Matthias Pannebecker . . . was a bishop and the founder of the church at Charlestown, near Phoenixville, Chester County, Pa."¹ The date of Pennypacker's ordination is not known, but he had charge of the Mennonite congregation which later became the Phoenixville Church, from 1789-1794. He is not mentioned in the 1773 letter, so he must have been ordained between 1773 and 1789.

The earliest deed for a Charlestown Mennonite meetinghouse was made in 1795. On March 16, 1795 Joseph Showalter of Charlestown township conveyed forty perches of land to Matthias Pennypacker, Jacob Johnson, Christian Wisler, George Clemens, and Abraham Haldeman of the same township for a consideration of five shillings, "In trust for the use of a place of worship and burial for the Society of people called Mennonists and for no other use forever."

There was also a second purchase of land. On December 31, 1798 Jacob Buckwalter and his wife "Modlena" conveyed 158.8 perches to David Buckwalter of Charlestown township and Abraham Reiff of Providence township for a consideration of twelve pounds. On the same day David Buckwalter and Abraham Reiff gave a deed of trust to Jacob High, Henry Rhoads, and Daniel Showalter of Charlestown township and David Long-acre of Providence township "For a meeting house for religious worship of the members of the society of Mennonists commonly called Dutch Baptists in Charlestown Township."

The author does not know the relation of these lots to each other, nor whether more than one Charlestown Mennonite meetinghouse was ever erected. The only meetinghouse known by old people and local historians stood near the present village of Charlestown, and was evidently built on the land given for that purpose in 1795. It adjoined the farm recently owned by Isaac Detweiler, later sold to his son, Elwood Detweiler. Elwood Detweiler has also sold the farm and now lives in Phoenixville.

On January 6, 1824 Wesley Anderson of Charlestown township and Abraham Holdeman of Charlestown, Henry Holdeman of Pikeland and David Showalter of Tredyffrin "Trustees of the Minist Society of Charlestown" exchanged lands, "for the accommodation of each other and in order

¹ Quoted from a personal letter, John F. Funk, *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers*, Elkhart, Indiana, 1878, p. 125.

to maintain harmony and friendship between them." The trustees gave Anderson a lot of land on the northwest side of the meetinghouse "up to within one perch of the wall," in exchange for land on the southwest side of the old meetinghouse lot. This is recorded at West Chester in *Miscellaneous Book 1*, page 354, and a copy of the draft is endorsed thereon.

The Charlestown congregation was evidently served by the Phoenixville preachers. It remained small and existed only for about a half century. An old man now living in Phoenixville had moved to a farm adjoining the Charlestown Mennonite meetinghouse in 1867. No services were conducted there in that year or since. After its abandonment by the church, an old recluse lived in the meetinghouse. Finally the old building collapsed altogether and was eventually removed. Today not even the cemetery is discernible.

Chapter XXIV

DIAMOND ROCK

Also BEIDLERS' and CHESTER VALLEY

Tredyffrin Township, Chester County

The Diamond Rock Mennonite meetinghouse formerly stood near Cedar Hollow in the Chester Valley in Tredyffrin township.¹ Near it was located an eight-cornered schoolhouse which is still standing. Both the schoolhouse and the cemetery, about an eighth of a mile west of it, are cared for by the Diamond Rock School Association.

The man who was chiefly responsible for the erection of the meetinghouse was Jacob Beidler, father of Preacher Israel Beidler. Jacob was born in Bucks county in 1778. About 1802 he married Mary Landis of Franconia. After marriage they settled on a Chester county farm a little over two miles from Valley Forge, on the road to Phoenixville. A. J. Fretz² says of him, "Early trained in the religious faith of his forefathers he became a devout, conscientious and consistent member of the Mennonite church" In 1835 he built, or was instrumental in building, the Diamond Rock Mennonite meetinghouse a little more than a half mile west of his home. "For some reason, religious services were seldom held here and since his [Jacob's] death [1864] the property has fallen into decay."

In appearance the stone building was quite simple. It was about twenty-five by thirty feet in size and stood parallel with the road in the middle of a half-acre cemetery surrounded by a wall. There were two doors, both toward the highway, and between them was the pulpit. The people therefore faced toward the road as they sat in the meetinghouse. The men occupied the western half of the auditorium, and the women the eastern side. There were two windows in each end of the building and three on the rear side, opposite the pulpit. The pulpit was built on the order of the pulpit in the present Providence meetinghouse—a simple desk wide enough for a number of men to sit behind. The meetinghouse was covered with a shingle roof, the ridge of the roof being parallel with the road. Over one of the doors was a stone bearing the inscription,

M E N N O N I S T
M E E T I N G H O U S E
B U I L T S E P T E M B E R
1835

That stone is now in the cemetery wall on the right side of the entrance.

¹ See N. B. Grubb's article in the *1923 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 24, 25. Grubb is mistaken in a number of points. Mention is also made of Diamond Rock in the May, 1932, *Christian Monitor*, Scottdale, Pa.

² A. J. Fretz in his *Beidler Family History*, 1903, pp. 185, 186.

After being closed for over forty years a reopening service was held in the building on June 28, 1908. John W. Weaver, Field Worker of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, assisted by Amos Stoltzfus, C. R. Haldeman and others of near Frazer, got the work under way. John B. Senger preached; his text was Luke 19:10. Every two weeks thereafter for about two years services were conducted by a preacher from the Lancaster or Franconia Conferences. A Sunday school was organized with an Amish Mennonite superintendent, Amos Stoltzfus, in charge. The first school consisted of eight or ten colored boys and a few others. One woman was received into the church. In 1910 the work was transferred to the Frazer schoolhouse, and the present Frazer congregation is the result.

The Diamond Rock meetinghouse, already in a poor condition, soon became quite dilapidated. In January, 1927, George A. Detweiler of Phoenixville, in behalf of the Diamond Rock School Association, employed Sylvester Slider to tear down the old meetinghouse. The stones were used to repair the cemetery wall. The burying ground was also graded. Many of the benches of the Diamond Rock meetinghouse are in the basement and the Sunday-school rooms of the Frazer meetinghouse.

The son of the original builder was Israel Beidler (1815-1876), who was a preacher in John H. Oberholtzer's Conference.³ A. J. Fretz calls Beidler "Stated preacher for Diamond Rock meeting . . . and also at the Mennonite Church, Phoenixville." There is an old man at the Welsh Mountain Home who lived in Phoenixville when a boy. His statement agrees with what Fretz says. He remembers that services were held on alternate Sundays at Phoenixville and Diamond Rock, and that Israel Beidler was the minister. Beidler lived south of and near the Diamond Rock meetinghouse.

N. B. Grubb made a transcript of the cemetery in 1922. He lists forty-five markers having the following names; Bartlet, Beidler, Bloomhart, Detweiler, Hageman, Haldeman, McClosky, Ruth, Rickabaugh, Showalter, Wagner, and Wismer.

In 1773 the Franconia bishops wrote, "as to the Amish, they are many in number, but they are not here near us, and we can give no further information concerning them except only this, that they hold very fast to the outward and ancient institutions." About two miles west of the Diamond Rock meetinghouse there is an Amish Mennonite meetinghouse, whose history has not been investigated by the author.

³ In 1851 Oberholtzer's Conference expelled Beidler and three other ministers, commonly called the "Hunsicker faction."

Chapter XXV

PHOENIXVILLE

Chester County

Samuel W. Pennypacker made an intensive study of the development of Phoenixville and vicinity.¹ "Among the original settlers, the Andersons were Episcopalians, the Buckwalters, Mennonites; the Starrs and Coates, Quakers; and when they worshipped their altars were at their own firesides or in the groves. As the numbers of the different denominations increased they began to meet for purposes of religious intercourse at each other's houses in turns. The Episcopalians built the first house of worship in the vicinity intended especially for divine service in the Valley; the Presbyterians the next, at Charlestown; and the Mennonites a third, on the ridge, near the present residence of the Heckel family. The first meetinghouse in Schuylkill Township was erected about the year 1750, on the Charlestown Road, two miles from Phoenixville, by the members of the various sects, and was intended for their mutual accommodation. It was afterward converted into a dwelling. In 1772 the Mennonites commenced another on Main Street, near Nutts' Road [now Route 83], since successively known as Buckwalters' and Morgans' School House, which was designed for both educational and religious purposes. The third in the township, and the oldest place of worship now standing [1871], is the Mennonite Meeting house, at the southwest corner of Main and Church Streets, in Phoenixville, erected in 1794. The first preacher was Matthias Pennypacker, who, for five years previously, had had charge of the congregation at Buckwalter's School House. Upon his death he was succeeded respectively by John Buckwalter, Daniel Showalter, George Hellerman, Jacob Halderman, John Showalter, and Israel Beitler, all of them preachers of the olden style, who would, it may be, excite mirth amid a modern congregation because the quaintness of their diction, the peculiarities of their dress and the sanctity of their lives were alike in contrast with the customs and requirements of the faster generations of today [1871!], but whose homely truths, uttered with the eloquence of faith and impressed by the morality of their conduct, suited well the tastes of the goodly people who listened to them."

The 1794 building in Phoenixville was erected on land granted by Jacob Buckwalter for church and cemetery purposes only. Little is known of the life of the congregation. The first official was Bishop Matthias Pennypacker (1742-1808). Preacher John Buckwalter (1749-1835) lived at Charlestown. Preacher Daniel Showalter (1764-1840 or 1841) was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Bishop Matthias Pennypacker. George Hellerman (1795-1867) was a Mennonite preacher for over thirty years, and was one of the first ones to preach in English. He preached at Germantown and at

¹ Samuel W. Pennypacker, *Annals of Phoenixville and Vicinity; From the Settlement to the Year 1871*, Philadelphia, 1872, pp. 181 ff.

various places in the Franconia Conference. Of Preacher Jacob Haldeman nothing is known. Preacher Jesse J. Beitler (1805-1863) was ordained prior to 1847. He went with the Oberholtzer group in the division of that year but soon returned to the Franconia Conference.² Preacher Israel Beidler (1815-1876), ordained about 1847, was in 1851 expelled from Oberholtzer's Conference together with three others of the "Hunsicker faction."

By 1847 Franconia Conference Mennonitism was probably extinct at Phoenixville. But the remaining story is so brief that it might well be related in this chapter.

Henry A. Hunsicker, an independent Mennonite (really of the "Hunsicker faction," but not a member of any Mennonite Conference) revived a congregation after it had collapsed. In 1873 he attempted to stimulate interest by building a new church building.³ (The old meetinghouse was evidently already razed at that time.) So a petition was presented to the Chester county courts asking permission to sell part of the cemetery to raise funds. The Court granted the petition on condition that all the money be used in erecting the new building. It was all used, but it was not sufficient. When the new building was completed there was a debt of \$2,000 resting on it. The Mennonites then allowed the Lutherans to use their building on alternate Sundays. Henry A. Hunsicker was succeeded as pastor by another one of the "Hunsicker faction," J. T. Preston. The Lutheran Church flourished, but the Mennonites dwindled numerically. The Lutherans then began negotiations to take over the property. With that end in view a Lutheran congregation, "Central," was created on December 5, 1875. Upon the election of trustees the Lutherans took over the property, assumed the indebtedness, and promised to keep the property in good repair.

In 1905 the present Sunday-school annex was built, though some graves were located where the annex now stands. A more regrettable act was the burying of all but one or two of the tombstones in the cemetery surrounding the church building. As one walks by the beautiful lawn of Central Lutheran Church today he would never imagine that he was looking on a lot where about a hundred Mennonites have been laid to rest.

There was a note of bitterness in the words of the Honorable Samuel W. Pennypacker when he feared (1871) that the Mennonite property would be seized for purposes other than that for which it was intended. "The meeting house, occupying as it does, a square of the most valuable ground in the borough, at the intersection of two of the principal streets, is like some trembling old man, who has met with success in his prime, but whose friends have fallen from his side until he is left helpless and alone, and whom the eye of covetousness watches impatiently as he totters toward the grave. Stores and business places are springing up around it threateningly; already the march of improvement has shorn it upon three sides; and on the

² The testimony of Preacher Isaac Meyer in the Boyertown litigation over meetinghouse rights, *Paper Book of Appellants, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Eastern District, January Term, 1883* . . . , Reading, Pa., 1883, p. 25.

³ *1923 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 22-24.

opposite corner, an imposing structure, built on the bones of the earliest settlers of Phoenixville, tells in the mocking gloss and glitter of its newness, the fate that awaits the things of the past."⁴

⁴ Samuel W. Pennypacker, *Annals of Phoenixville* . . . , Philadelphia, 1872, pp. 181 ff.

Chapter XXVI

GOTTSHALLS' or SCHWENKSVILLE

Formerly ZIEGLERS' and MINE HILL

Lower Frederick Township, Montgomery County

The history of Gottshalls' congregation prior to 1847 is very brief.¹ After 1847 the congregation was no longer in the Franconia Conference; its subsequent history is found in Part V, Chapter II.

For some time prior to 1818 the Reformed, Lutherans, and Mennonites alternated holding services in a school and meetinghouse located in a cemetery. This was the site of what was later Keeley's Church. According to N. B. Grubb the Skippack preachers supplied the congregation, the Mennonites holding their service every four weeks. The building was actually a Lutheran and Reformed Union house of worship.

The widely-known tradition is that there were none too amicable feelings toward the Mennonites, and one Sunday morning when Bishop Henry Hunsicker was scheduled to preach, the janitor was unable to get the fire to burn. The stove simply filled the room with smoke. An investigation revealed that someone had stuffed wet tow in the stovepipe. The Mennonites quietly withdrew without holding a service.

Both Gottshall Gottshall and Andrew Ziegler then offered land to the congregation for the erection of a meetinghouse and for a burying ground. Ziegler's offer was accepted. He conveyed one acre and seven perches of land on Mine Hill to the congregation for one dollar. The land was deeded to Henry Ziegler, William Gottshall, Samuel Pannebecker, Junior, John Holdeman, John Bingeman, John Keeler, Junior, and John Herstein, in trust for the Mennonite Church. This is the present Mennonite cemetery lot near Schwenksville. A stone meetinghouse was erected in 1818. In the same year William Gottshall (1784-1875) was ordained as deacon for the congregation. No resident minister was ever stationed there. For almost thirty years Deacon Gottshall went to the Franconia Conference and arranged for preachers to supply the pulpit of his church. Deacon Gottshall signed the Skippack alms audits regularly from 1818 to 1847. In the division of 1847 both he and his congregation united with Oberholtzer's Conference.

The 1818 meetinghouse stood until 1851. The location of Gottshalls' meetinghouse was in the present cemetery along the Mine road, a short distance west of Schwenksville.

¹ Daniel K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Menmoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, pp. 100, 101; 1900 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 30; 1919 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 29, 30. Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 839.

Chapter XXVII

HERSTEINS'

Limerick Township, Montgomery County

Another outpost of the Skippack congregation was Hersteins'. It is located near the village of Neiffers. The donors of the land on which the school and meetinghouse were erected, were Jacob Shoemaker and his wife, Magdalena. On January 3, 1821, they conveyed seventy-four perches of land for one dollar, to Christian Stearly, weaver, of Limerick; Abraham Bergey, blacksmith, of same township; John Shoemaker, miller, of Frederick; and George Adam Slonecker, "joyner," of Limerick township, "for the sole use benefit and behoof of the School, Meetinghouse and Burial ground of those contributing toward the building, repairing and keeping in repairs such necessary building thereto belonging as a majority of them shall from time to time direct."¹ The deed does not specify that the Mennonites should conduct the services but this was no doubt the intention.

N. B. Grubb asserts that Hersteins' was an outpost of the Skippack Mennonite Church "early in 1800." Two facts lend support to this statement: several graves have markers with dates before 1821; and a stone in the wall of the present building has cut upon it,

H

1917

1803

Might not a schoolhouse or meetinghouse have been erected on private land prior to 1821, perhaps in 1803? Witness many such cases. One fact is certain, a number of people were buried at Hersteins' when the cemetery was still privately owned. At least three of these graves have legible markers, Maria Shoemaker, 1803; Isaac Shoemaker, 1805; and Abraham Hunsberger, 1816.

No minister was ever ordained for this meeting, although Cassel claims there was one time a membership of forty. Strangely, N. B. Grubb states that William Gottshall was ordained deacon at Hersteins'. D. K. Cassel makes the same claim and adds that Gottshall later united with the Schwenksville Church and served until his death.

The names found on the tombstones are Bergey, Gebhart, Fetter, Finnegan, Hunsberger, Herstein, Heffelfinger, Jones, Keelor, Kohl, Kraus, Lightcap, Leister, Neiman, Saylor, Shoemaker, Stearly, Tyson, Umstead, and Urms. The cemetery is now a community burying ground. Among those buried here is John Herstein (see Part IV, Chapter II, p. 323).

According to N. B. Grubb the Skippack preachers had charge of the services. D. K. Cassel's list of those who preached there (where did he get

¹ George F. P. Wanger, *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., January, 1931, p. 31. See also 1922 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 41; and Daniel K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, p. 103.

it?) would indicate that the services were conducted by ministers from various parts of the conference. He names, (Bishop) Henry Hunsicker (1752-1836, of Skippack); (Bishop) Jacob Gottshall (1769-1845, of Franconia); Christian Haldeman (1744-1833, of Salford); John Minnich (of Germantown); John Kephart (1751-1822, of Doylestown); (John) High (1742-1815, of Coventry); (Jacob) Latshaw (1796-1867, of Vincent); Matthias Rittenhouse (1770-1832, of the Skippack circuit) and several General Conference Mennonite preachers after 1847. Perhaps the Skippack officials arranged for the services. The services were held only during the summer seasons. Finally they were discontinued altogether. It is doubtful if there ever was much of a Mennonite organization there. A small belfry was added to the building and an addition built to the north end of the structure in 1917. The building is now called "Herstein Chapel." A Sunday school had had an irregular existence in recent years until 1934 when a nonsectarian group took charge. The enrollment is now eighty-five. Besides the regular preaching service a young people's society meets every Sunday evening and every Tuesday evening; each Wednesday evening the congregation has prayer meeting and Bible study; men's prayer meetings are held each Thursday evening; Sunday-school teachers' meeting on Friday evening, and prayer meeting Saturday evening.

The pastor, Clarence H. Diddon of Schwenksville, R. 2, was at one time a Baptist, but is now a member of no denomination. He was ordained by the Eastern Ministerial Union, Incorporated, of Pennsylvania. The congregation, numbering about fifty-five communicant members, gives him financial support. He never had any Biblical training. The work seems rather characteristic of the so-called "Fundamentalist" groups and is in no sense Mennonite in character.

Chapter XXVIII

BERTOLETS'

Upper Frederick Township, Montgomery County

The congregational history of Bertolets' meeting is discussed in Part V, Chapter II, as the congregation was not well organized until it was a part of Oberholtzer's Conference.¹ But the meetinghouse was erected before the division, and the burying ground was in use more than a century before the meetinghouse was built, so a brief discussion is included here.

A memorial stone in honor of Pioneer Henry Frey (d. 1734), erected in Bertolets' burying ground in 1910, states that the Frey family "established this cemetery [in] 1725." The oldest legible marker is of the year 1766. The lot remained a private burying ground for more than a century.

All the sources state that Bertolets' meetinghouse was erected in 1846. The deed is dated April 1, 1847. Daniel and Catherine Bertolet conveyed a half acre of land to Abraham Hunsberger, Henry Bertolet, and John Hunsberger, "trustees, for the use of a meeting house for the Society of Mennonites, and for the use of the inhabitants who are burying in the burying ground adjoining said tract known as Bertolet's burying ground" The meetinghouse was to be free to people of all religious persuasions and their ministers, for funerals. The cost of the half acre was twenty-five dollars.

The opening services were held in the new meetinghouse on Whitsuntide, May 23, 1847. Henry S. Bassler, a minister of the Reformed Church, and Preachers Abraham Hunsicker of Skippack and John H. Oberholtzer of Swamp, both Mennonites, preached.

It is noteworthy that Hunsicker and Oberholtzer were leaders in the division of that year. And the attitudes of the members of the Franconia Conference were naturally aligned with one or the other group prior to the final break in October, 1847. Evidently Hunsicker summoned Oberholtzer all the way from the Swamp congregation to attend the opening services of Bertolets'. It appears, therefore, that the erection of Bertolets' meetinghouse was a project of the group which later formed Oberholtzer's Conference. D. K. Cassel names seven people who were received into the fellowship of the Mennonite Church at Bertolets' in the autumn of 1847. Abraham Hunsicker preached at Bertolets' in that year, and was then succeeded by Moses H. Gottshall, pastor of Gottshall's congregation at Schwenksville. Bertolets' congregation was probably never in the Franconia Conference.

The most numerous surnames found on the tombstones of the old Bertolets' burying ground are given by Bean as Bertolet, Bertolette, Bliem,

¹ Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 840; also Daniel K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, pp. 101, 102.

De Nice, Dotterer, Frey, Gottschalk, Grobb, Hummel, Hunsberger, Nyce, Shoemaker, Smoll, Weidman, and Zoller. A colored man named Caesar is reported buried there, but he has no marker. There are many unmarked graves at Bertolets'.

Chapter XXIX

UPPER MILFORD

Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County

A Lehigh county history¹ gives the following account of the Upper Milford Mennonite Church. "The Church of this congregation is situated near the village of Zionsville, in Upper Milford, on the public road leading from Macungie to Sumneytown, and on the King's high-road It has been traditionally reported that this congregation was founded and organized previous to the year 1740, or as early as 1735. It is true that the Mennonites settled very early in several parts of Upper Milford previous to the year 1735, and without any doubt they organized their congregation previous to the year 1740.

"February 10, 1772, John Schantz and Benjamin Meyer, trustees of the Mennonite congregation, bought from Henry Schleifer for twenty-five shillings one-half acre of ground (the same on which many years previous a church had been erected, and which also had been used as a burying-ground). On January 20, 1795 Ulrich Baszler and Abraham Schantz, trustees . . . , bought of Conrad Meyer a second tract of thirty-nine perches, to enlarge the burying-ground."

A more recent history states, "The Mennonites opened a school in Upper Milford, near Zionsville, between 1735 and 1749."² Dr. C. Henry Smith states that in 1745 a piece of land was bought for church purposes by Heinrich Schliefer, Samuel Mayer and John Gehman.^{2a} But the source of this information is not indicated.

The first meetinghouse, a log structure, was therefore probably erected about two hundred years ago, 1735-1740.

The 1899 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac* states that in 1816 a stone meetinghouse displaced the original log building. The 1816 building also served both church and school purposes. It was repaired and enlarged in 1843.

According to tradition the first preacher was Michael Holtzhausen, who served "for years." He evidently died prior to 1773. His successor was John (Hans) Gehman (1741-1806) who is also not mentioned in the 1773 catalog. His son, John Gehman (1771-1848), preached thirty-five years. John Schantz (1774-1855) served the congregation as a minister for twenty-seven years. Joseph Schantz (1814-1881), son of John, was or-

¹ Alfred Matthews and Austin N. Hungerford, *History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 374; 1899 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 31, 32.

² James J. Hauser, *A History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania* . . . , Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1902, p. 34.

^{2a} C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania* . . . , Norristown, Pa., 1929, p. 144.

dained in 1844. He followed Oberholtzer in the division of 1847 and took almost the whole congregation with him into the new conference. The Franconia Conference therefore ordained no ministers after 1847 at Upper Milford.

The deacon of the church in 1847 was Samuel Kauffman; he also followed Oberholtzer. The names of the deacons before Kauffman are lost. It has been conjectured that Ulrich Basler and Abraham Hiestand served as deacons but there seems to be no support for the claim.

The further history of the Upper Milford congregation (of the General Conference Mennonites) is found in Part V, Chapter II.

Chapter XXX

FLATLAND

Richland Township, Bucks County

The Flatland congregation was a part of the Franconia Conference for only ten years.¹ The Flatland meetinghouse was erected in 1837 by members of the Swamp and Springfield congregations and was added to the Swamp bishop district which included East Swamp, West Swamp, Saucon, Upper Milford, Springfield, and perhaps a few small outposts. The building committee for the Flatland meetinghouse consisted of Peter Martin, George Landis, and Jacob Benner. The original building is still standing. In the north wall of the stone structure is a stone with the date, 1837 and the names "P. Martin, G. Landes [and] J. Benner" cut upon it.

George Landis was ordained as the first resident preacher and Jacob Benner was ordained deacon. Services were conducted every two weeks in the afternoon. The services were held on Sunday afternoon so as not to interfere with the Swamp or Springfield services.

The late Samuel Landis, son of Preacher George Landis, told John D. Souder that at the time of the division (1847) there were between fifty and seventy-five members. Fifty would perhaps be a conservative estimate. At the time of the Oberholtzer schism Deacon Benner stood with Oberholtzer and Preacher Landis remained with the Franconia Conference. Probably most of the members united with Oberholtzer's Conference. Those who remained in the Franconia Conference probably worshiped at Saucon or Springfield as they had done before the Flatland meetinghouse was built. A decade later (1857) Landis moved to Hilltown township and united with the Blooming Glen congregation. Here he lived and preached for the remainder of his life. He died in 1881.

The further history of the Flatland congregation of the General Conference Mennonites is found in Part V, Chapter II.

¹ Daniel K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, p. 118. 1899 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 28, 29.

Chapter XXXI

SAUCON

Upper Saucon Township, Lehigh County

Local historians state that the first Saucon meetinghouse was erected about 1738. In this log structure was a swinging partition which separated the portions of the building which were intended for school and for meeting purposes. This 1738 log building was replaced by the present stone meetinghouse in 1847.¹ The meetinghouse is just a short distance north of Coopersburg.

The first deed was granted June 4, 1751. John Yoder conveyed three acres of land to George Bachman, Philip Geisinger, John Reeser, Samuel Newcomer, and Samuel Bechtel "in trust only for the proper use and behoof of the people called Mennonists and those who shall be in religious fellowship with them, and do and shall constantly attend their meetings for the public worship of God and are owned and received by the congregation of the said people called Mennonists to be members of their Christian Society. And for the intent and purpose, that is to say for the better accommodation of ye said people with a piece or parcel of land for the decent burial of their dead, the erection and building of meeting houses, school houses, and other necessary buildings."²

Among those who ministered to the congregation were Samuel Bechtel (d. 1802, buried at Rockhill) who lived in Upper Saucon from 1748 until 1764; Jacob Meyer (1721-1790), ordained preacher in 1752, and bishop in 1763; Bishop Jacob's son, Samuel Meyer (d. 1832); Michael Landis (1767-1839), ordained about 1804; Valentine Young (1773-1850), ordained about 1804; William Landis (1798-1848), ordained about 1840; and Samuel Moyer (1806-1877). Samuel Moyer was the last minister of the Franconia Conference who preached regularly at Saucon; he is buried in the adjoining cemetery. For a number of years he was affiliated with the General Conference Mennonites, but returned to the Franconia Mennonites about 1861 and was received as a preacher. The name of only one deacon is known, Samuel Meyer (1788-1858), who served for twenty-six years.

The Franconia Mennonites had a very weak congregation at Saucon after the division of 1847. In the last decade of the nineteenth century they

¹ *History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, by Alfred Matthews and Austin N. Hungerford, Philadelphia, 1884 p. 430. But A. J. Fretz, *Beidler Family History*, p. 15, says the 1738 structure was replaced in 1741, and that the present building was erected in 1841.

² *1913 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 33, 34. In the deed at Easton, H - 1 - 227, the grantees are given, "George Pachman, Phillip Keissinger, John Reeser, Samuel Newcomer and Samuel Pechtler, all of or adjacent to the Township of Upper Saucunk in the County of Bucks" In Pennsylvania German the name is usually pronounced, Sauk-na.

still conducted occasional services,³ but the few Saucon members usually attended services at Springfield. Evidently no Sunday school was ever organized. The last member of the Saucon (Franconia Conference) Mennonite Church was Peter Young who died March 19, 1899. Today the meetinghouse is in the possession of the General Conference Mennonites. (See Part V, Chapter II.)

³ In the diary of Jacob B. Mensch is a note that at the May, 1892 Conference the Dunkards made a request for the use of the Saucon meetinghouse on the "Old" (Franconia Conference) Mennonite Sunday. "Die dunker haben anspruch gemacht fuer die alte gemeinde ihren Sontag in Saucony versamlung house." Strangely enough he does not record the disposition of the matter. The author is inclined to doubt the granting of the request.

Chapter XXXII

SIEGFRIEDS'

Now West Twenty-first Street, Northampton, Northampton County

In the 1773 letter to Holland the Franconia Conference bishops mention a "Lehay" congregation. So far as the present author knows no one has ever identified "Lehay." But it is at once evident that "Lehay" is "Lehigh." And Lehigh is the name of a river which drains Carbon, Northampton, Lehigh, and other counties and empties into the Delaware river at Easton. The only known Mennonite congregation which could have appropriately been called Lehigh in 1773 met in the so-called Siegfried meetinghouse which once stood in a grove in what is now the borough of Northampton. Fortunately the meager records have been carefully examined by a capable historian.¹ The remainder of this chapter, giving the story of the "Lehigh" Church is taken in full from John Baer Stoudt's account.

"The true history of any state, town or community must begin with its first centers of worship, its venerable churches and well filled graveyards Such a center of influence, and in all probability the nucleus for the town of Siegfried, is to be found in the old Mennonite meeting house, which stood in a grove on what is now West Twenty-first Street, opposite their cemetery, now generally known as the Siegfried burial ground

"No definite data as to the settlement of the Mennonites in Whitehall and Allen townships has been handed down to us, and the names of some of them are entirely forgotten, nor is the year of their arrival definitely known. That the Showalters, Baslers, Funks, Zeiglers, Heistands, Siegfrieds and Landis' are of Mennonite extraction, is however a known fact, and these, no doubt, were the founders of the congregation, and the people worshipped in the meeting house, which stood on West Twenty-first street. Jacob Showalter, Sr., of Whitehall township, appears to have been one of the leaders of the congregation. In 1759 he sold to William Allen, his farm of 450 acres, including the 'undivided half' belonging to John Moore, the high sheriff of Northampton county, situated between the Lehigh river and the Deshler, Kern and Koehler plantations, and the Indian Falls in the Lehigh river and the Schreiber plantation.

"In the same year Allen sold the same again in four tracts, viz: 150 acres to Joseph Showalter; 100 acres to John Showalter, Sr; and 100 acres to Peter Bassler [and 100 acres to]

"These four families as stated above were Mennonites and probably the nucleus of the congregation. This was apparently only a paper transaction, for the purpose of giving the occupants a clear title and deed to their

¹ John Baer Stoudt, *The Life and Times of Col. John Siegfried*, Northampton, Pa., 1914, pp. 29-34. This is reproduced almost verbatim in the *History of Northampton County and the Grand Valley of the Lehigh*, William J. Heller; Boston, New York, Chicago; 1920, Volume II, pp. 529-530.

already established homes. Having obtained a lawful title to their possessions, they, no doubt, if not already built, determined to erect a house of worship

"It is therefore probable that their meeting house was erected in 1760, or possibly a few years prior. Surely not later than 1761, for on an old land draft of that year the church is already designated. Tradition describes it as a small log building, rudely constructed, and also tells us that the early worshippers were frequently disturbed in their services by the Indians. During the summer and when the building became insecure, services were held in the woods adjoining. In 1771 Joseph Showalter sold his farm to Conrad Leisenring, John Showalter to Christopher Kern and Jacob Showalter, Jr., to George Koehler, and removed to Lancaster county, to dwell among their fellow members in the faith. A few years later Peter Bassler sold his property to Philip Jacob Schreiber and joined his former neighbors in their new homes. He is said to have been the last of the Mennonites in Whitehall township. Through removal and death the congregation gradually declined and the building became insecure and was finally abandoned.

"The Old Mennonite Cemetery on West 21st Street, generally spoken of as 'the Siegfried burial plot' on which the proposed Siegfried monument is to be erected, is one of Northampton's few really old landmarks, and all that is left to remind the present generation that the town was once the center of a peace loving and God fearing Mennonite settlement. In it are said to repose the ashes of almost a hundred of the early settlers.

"The cemetery originally comprised one acre. It was conveyed March 10, 1770, by Daniel Chambers to Joseph Showalter, Henry Funk, Peter Fried and Jacob Baer, in trust and for the Mennonist congregation of Whitehall and Allen Townships. When in 1802, the new meeting house along the road from Weaversville to Kreidersville [see next chapter] was erected and the cemetery opened, few interments, if any, were made on the old plot. By a special Act of Assembly, May 8, 1829, Jacob Funk, a surviving member of the old congregation, was given permission to sell the unoccupied part of the cemetery and use the proceeds to erect a stone fence around the part containing burials. On the 28th day of the same month, the unused part was conveyed to Daniel Siegfried, a son of Col. John Siegfried. A stone wall, three feet high and sixteen inches wide, was subsequently erected. This wall was removed in 1885 and the present iron fence erected. The money for which was raised by popular subscription through the efforts of Rev. Tilghman Seiple, a grandson of Henry Funk. It was subscribed chiefly by descendants of Mennonite families, several members of the Grand Army of the Republic, and a few public spirited citizens. After the fence was erected, the cemetery was rededicated on a Sunday afternoon in the presence of a large concourse of people.

"When 21st street was raised, the cemetery was also filled in to bring it up to the level of the street and all the little mounds were covered over and even the headstones, with the exception of those of John Siegfried and Jacob Baer, both of Revolutionary Fame. Until quite recently, it was run over with weeds and briars, a neglected and in the minds of some even a

haunted spot. It has however of late years been well kept by several descendants of Adam Laubach, members of the Daughters of the American Revolution. A neat tablet recounts its history and some of the patriotic services of Col. John Siegfried, the friend of Washington. A flag pole has also been erected, from which there floats on the breeze an American flag. The inscription on the head-stone of Col. John Siegfried's grave is unique in that the inscription is in both English and German

"Note:—the Mennonites herein mentioned are not to be confounded with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, which represent a different type of religion."

Chapter XXXIII

SETTLEMENT

Allen Township, Northampton County

It was difficult to decide whether or not to write the story of the Settlement congregation and meetinghouse in the same chapter as the Siegfried congregation. One has the impression in studying the case that the Siegfried meetinghouse fell into decay, the life of the church almost died out, and that there was a determined effort made to again build a meetinghouse which resulted in the Settlement house of worship.¹

There must have been an element of continuity in the two congregations for they are designated by the same name in the deeds. Before quoting from the deeds an explanation is in order. Whitehall township lies on the west side of the Lehigh river and is in Lehigh county. Allen township lies on the east side of the Lehigh river and is in Northampton county. The 1770 deed from Daniel Chambers conveyed the Siegfried burial acre to four trustees "in trust and for the Mennonist congregation of Whitehall and Allen Townships." On February 11, 1802 Thomas Horner and his wife, Jane, of Allen township, for a consideration of twenty dollars conveyed one-half acre and four perches of land to Jacob Baer, Jacob Heston (Hiestand), John Seigler (Zeigler), and Samuel Landis, "for the Sole Use benefit and behoof the Menonist Congregation in Whitehall and Allen Townships and the adjoining Townships thereto . . ."² The land was given to the trustees in trust ". . . and for no other use but that of a meeting house and school" A frame building, twenty-six by thirty feet in size, was erected in 1802. Twenty-eight people subscribed sums ranging from three shillings four pence to twelve pounds; the total sum being eighty-four pounds.

Practically nothing is known of the subsequent history of the Settlement Mennonite Church. Evidently it is a story of decline and death. Very likely the Mennonite young people united with the thriving churches of the community. The present chief of police of Northampton is evidently descended of Mennonite forbears; his name is James Hiestand. His father, a member of the Reformed Church, used to tell his son on Sunday, "Nommiedag gehe mir nach der Mennische Karich." (This afternoon we shall go to the Mennonite Church). Services were then (about 1880) held perhaps once a month on Sunday afternoon.

¹ See the references cited in Chapter XXXII. Mr. Edgar C. Nagle of the Cement National Bank of Siegfried, Northampton, Pennsylvania, was of assistance. See also the *1914 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 19-22; and Daniel K. Casel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, Philadelphia, 1890, pp. 129, 130.

² Deed Book at Easton, G-8-743. Note that the congregation bears the same name as the one of the 1770 deed. One trustee is also common to both. The buildings were only a few miles apart.

Daniel K. Cassel^{2a} furnishes a list of those who preached there. He names ministers of the Swamp district both before and after the division, Evangelical Mennonites, and independents.

John Baer Stoudt says, "There are no records of the congregational life and activities of the worshippers in this church. No doubt, in former years there were regular preaching services. The names of those who ministered regularly to these people are not known. Through death the congregation, which was never large, gradually declined. Frequently the building was used for school purposes, and Rev. Cyrus J. Becker at one time taught in it. During the last decade [1904-1914] a Sunday School was held in the meeting house, and also an occasional service. In later years there were occasional services, among those preaching being Levi Young, Tilghman Seiple, C. J. Becker, Samuel Landis and J. Y. Schultz. [As to Landis and Schultz, see *The Godshall Group*, pages 390, 391]. The late Moses Gottshall [General Conference Mennonite] related how he was greatly annoyed by wasps on one occasion when conducting a preaching service in the church."³

The minutes of the spring session of 1860 of Oberholtzer's Conference contain the following note: "Upon the request of the members of the so-called Settlement congregation which is without a minister at the present time, that one of our ministers visit them periodically, it was resolved that the request be complied with, especially during the summer months." And according to both Stoudt and Cassel the last services conducted there were by men like Samuel Landis and Jonas Y. Schultz—independent Mennonites who are claimed by the present Godshall group (Part V, Chapter IV) as having been of their sect.

About 1908 the school district of Allen township desired to secure the Settlement meetinghouse for school purposes. Edgar C. Nagle, representing the school district, asked a descendant of the 1802 trustee, Samuel Landis, to present a petition to the Court of Common Pleas of Northampton county to appoint a new trustee of the Settlement Church property. Judge Henry W. Scott appointed the descendant, William Landes of Bath, as trustee. Whereupon William Landes petitioned the Court asking for permission to sell half of the tract, on which the meetinghouse and cemetery were located, for \$500.00. This sum he would retain in trust for the maintenance of the cemetery. The Court granted the petition and on July 14, 1908 William Landes, trustee of the Mennonite Church in Allen township, sold $3\frac{1}{100}$ acres of land along the road leading from Kreidersville to Weaversville to the school district of Allen township for \$500.00. This was the portion of the tract on which the meetinghouse stood. But the

^{2a} *History of the Mennonites*, pp. 274, 275. "The following ministers officiated there from time to time: Valentine Young, Samuel Musselman, Christian Bliem, John Bechtel, William Gehman, John Oberholtzer, Christian Clemmer, David Henning, William Shelly, Henry Diehl, Jonas Musselman and Samuel Moyer, until about twenty years ago, when the number was reduced considerably." The source of this list is doubtful.

³ Rev. John Baer Stoudt. *The Life and Times of Col. John Siegfried*, Northampton, Pa., 1914, p. 35.

school board abandoned their original plan. They later sold the building to William Schweitzer who converted it into a dwelling and still resides there.

William Landes of Bath, Pennsylvania, whom the Court appointed trustee in 1908, died January 13, 1930. After his death the Cement National Bank of Siegfried, Main Street at Twenty-first, Northampton, Pennsylvania, was appointed trustee of the Settlement cemetery and of the fund of \$500.00. William H. Landes, son of the deceased trustee, paid the \$500.00 over to the bank. Subsequently Dr. Daniel Hiestand of Allentown, Pennsylvania, whose parents are buried in the Settlement cemetery, repaired the wall of the old burying ground and in addition added \$250.00 to the trust fund. Other donations and the sale of some boxwood have raised the trust fund to the sum (1936) of \$943.34. The Cement National Bank of Siegfried has a caretaker for the cemetery, and they have graded the old burial acre and have made a careful record of all the tombstones. The Settlement cemetery is in a splendid condition. And the freshly-painted dwelling of Mr. Schweitzer, once the Settlement Mennonite meetinghouse, is also quite attractive. The only conspicuous change in the old building is the addition of a dormer window.

Over sixty tombstones are in the old burying ground. Among the names on the stones are Bear, Bechtel, Bliem, Coppes, Funk, Gerhard, Geisinger, Hiestand, Jung, Landes, Latschar, Scherrer, Seipel, Swartz, and Ziegler.

Thus another Mennonite congregation became extinct.

Chapter XXXIV

MOUNT BETHEL

Bangor, Northampton County

No one has ever thoroughly investigated the history of the Mennonites in the northeastern part of Northampton county. The present author has neither the time nor the funds to do so. But the information he was able to gather is here presented.¹

Northampton county was created from Bucks county in 1752, and Lehigh county was created from Northampton county in 1812. Mount Bethel township had been organized in Bucks county in 1746. Plainfield township was erected in 1762. Mount Bethel was later divided into Lower Mount Bethel and Upper Mount Bethel townships in 1787. Washington township was created from Lower Mount Bethel in 1871. This may seem like a maze of dates and townships but if one looks at the present map of Northampton county with these facts in mind it will help to make understandable the deeds cited in this chapter.

One more township must be mentioned. Smithfield township was organized in Bucks county in 1748. It came into Northampton county when the latter was erected in 1752. It will not be necessary to trace the complicated history of Smithfield township as it was operated on by the map makers. But in 1817 Lower Smithfield township, Northampton county, assumed the name Smithfield and was incorporated into Monroe county when the latter was erected in 1836. Forks township lies south of Plainfield and adjoins both Plainfield and Lower Mount Bethel. The background has now been laid for the history of the Mennonites in northeastern Northampton county.

In 1754 the taxables of Forks township included Martin Gross, Christian Gross, and Jacob Shelly. Jacob Culp and Tilghman Culp were in Smithfield township in 1786. The 1790 census of the United States reveals a number of Mennonite names in the upper part of Northampton County.² "Easton Town" included Abraham Backman, Mary Tyson, John Young, John Moyer, and Elizabeth Young. In Forks township were Jacob Shoemaker, Melchior Young, Jacob Young, Larance Swartz, Isaac Funk, William Hess, Jacob Fry, Adam Swartz, and Balso Swartz; also Snyder families. Lower Mount Bethel included Moses Weaver, Henry Akerman, Daniel Weaver, Joseph Martin, Samuel Johnson, and several Taylors. In Plainfield township were Valuntine Rore, Jacob Bender, John Bower, Teter Bower, Martin and Philip Fry, John Young, Jacob Rosenberger, Martin Mayer, Solom Stiner, Frederick Sigler, Roths, Snyders and Knorrs. Upper Mount Bethel

¹ Mr. Henry F. Marx, Librarian of the Easton (Pa.) Public Library, has worked out the history of the townships involved and has kindly contributed a wealth of information, part of which is here reproduced.

² *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1900, pp. 171-180.

township included Christian Bowman, John and Elisha Miers (Meyers?), Christopher Bowman, William Mack, Jr. and Sr., Christian and John Hess, Jacob Grub, Thomas, William and Mary Bear, and James Taylor. In Lower Smithfield township were John Nice, Daniel Shoemaker, and William Johnson.

* * * *

On April 9, 1798 Anna Kappes of Upper Mount Bethel township, Isaac Kolp, Senior, and Jacob Kappes conveyed three fourths of an acre of land for one dollar to Owen Honsbury and Jacob Stauffer, in trust "for and as a site for a house of religious Public worship, a school house, and a burial place for the dead, for the use of the German Congregation, or religious Society of Christians, commonly called Mennonists, residing in the said Township of Upper and Lower Mountbethel and this Neighborhood" ³ But this conveyance of 1798 was simply the legal transfer of property which had years before been given to the Mount Bethel Mennonite Church by Jacob Kappes, a member of the congregation. Anna Kappes was the executrix and evidently his widow; Isaac Kolp, Senior, the executor, and Jacob Kappes was his son. The deed goes on to recite the several provisions of the will of Jacob Kappes, deceased, saying, ". . . and in another part thereof he did give and devise three quarters of an Acre of the said land to the religious society, of which he was a member, and on which they had built a House for the service of Public Worship" ³ The will was made September 9, 1794. It is at once evident that prior to 1794 there was a Mount Bethel Mennonite Church and meetinghouse. The location of this meetinghouse has so far not been learned with certainty. (See Part II, Chapter XXXV, pages 236, 237.)

* * * *

Another deed bears the date December 28, 1822. Abraham Bickley of the township of Smithfield in the county of Northampton conveyed two acres of land in Lower Mount Bethel township to Herman Godshalk and Jacob Ackerman of the township[s] of Plainfield and Lower Mount Bethel, ". . . trustees of the Mennonist Society in Plainfield Upper and Lower Mount Bethel Township . . ." for a consideration of one dollar. This was located in what was later Washington township and is now a lot near the intersection of Broadway and South Fourth Street, Bangor, Pennsylvania.

On this two-acre lot of land the Mennonites erected a brick meetinghouse, twenty by thirty feet in 1822.^{3a} It was torn down many years ago, sometime between 1878 and 1928!

Prior to the erection of this 1822 brick meetinghouse a union house of worship was built of logs near by. This log building was erected in 1806.

Adjoining the 1822 Mennonite meetinghouse was a burying ground. About one hundred seventy interments have been made in this burying ground. About forty of these have no markers.⁴

³ Deed at Easton, E - 2 - 79.

^{3a} 1928 Anniversary Bulletin published by the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bangor, Pa.

⁴ A transcript of these tombstones is printed in the 1928 Anniversary Bulletin published by Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bangor, Pennsylvania.

It is not known who the Mennonite preachers were who served the Mount Bethel congregation. In Hellertown there lives a Mennonite sister, Anna Geissinger, aged ninety. She is a granddaughter of Bishop Jacob Moyer (1791-1859) of the Swamp district. She says that her grandfather administered communion to the Mennonite congregation of Mount Bethel. The name "Plainfield" was hazily attached in her mind to this congregation. She also states that Preacher John Geil (1778-1866) of Lexington used to go all the way to Mount Bethel to preach. He would make the trip in two days, staying over night with her grandfather, Bishop Jacob Moyer of Springfield.

The only known resident pastor of the Mount Bethel congregation was David Henning (1806-1881). He was evidently ordained by Oberholtzer's Conference but soon withdrew and united with William Gehman's "Evangelical Mennonites." According to the records⁵ of the Evangelical Mennonites, David Henning, a preacher, was a member of their first conference which convened September 24, 1858. And the minutes of the fall conference of 1859 of the General Conference Mennonites state, "And since the names of David Henning and Jacob Gottshall have not yet been entered upon our lists, the circumstances, however, being the same, they are no more to be reported as in our fellowship."

But Henning was not able to build up his congregation. The young people united with other denominations, chiefly the Lutherans, and the old members died. By 1870 the only members remaining were David and Elizabeth Henning and a Mrs. George Warrich. From the year 1865 on a Lutheran minister, B. F. Apple of Centerville, Pennsylvania, preached regularly in the Mennonite meetinghouse. A Lutheran Sunday School was organized there on June 6, 1875. Finally Henning urged the Lutherans to accept the property. A Lutheran congregation was organized by Rev. Apple on April 6, 1878.⁶ On May 15, 1878 David Henning and Elizabeth Warch of the township of Washington, as "survivors of the said Mennonite Society," conveyed the two acres (of 1822) to William H. Speer and Stephen Saeger, trustees of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran congregation of the borough of Bangor for a consideration of one dollar.⁷

The old Mennonite meetinghouse is now gone and an imposing Lutheran Church stands on the corner of Broadway and South Fourth Street.

The surnames on the stones of the Mount Bethel cemetery in Bangor include, Guster, Ackerman, Repsher, Rutt, Henning, Werner, Houseberg, Miller, Buzzard, Shook, Bergey, Rothrock, Lockard, Koppes, Kempfer, Auracher, Bowers, Heller, Long, Oyer, Warrich, Albert, Roberts, Dietz, Handelong, Smith, Delp, Weidlich, Speer, Seibold, Haines, and Rammel. Burials took place in the "Mennonite" portion of the present cemetery as late as 1923. The oldest legible stone is of 1823.

⁵ *Glaubenslehre und Kirchenzucht-Ordnung der Evangel. Mennoniten Gemeinschaft von Ost-Pennsylvanien*, Skippackville, Pa., 1866, p. 4.

⁶ From a contemporary document, signed and witnessed, preserved in the Lutheran Church safe, and published in the 1928 Anniversary Bulletin.

⁷ Deed at Easton, A - 16 - 81.

OTHER DEEDS

On March 28, 1831 Harmon Godshalk and Jacob Ackerman, trustees of the "Mennonist Congregation of the Township of Lower Mount Bethel" conveyed a tract of five acres and forty-eight perches of land to John Albert, Junior, of Lower Mount Bethel township for \$225.00.⁸ The land had been granted May 7, 1825 by Martin Overholt and wife to Godshalk and Ackerman. Perhaps this was a rejected site for another meetinghouse.

On March 10, 1849 Jacob Pysher of Lower Mount Bethel township and Catharine, his wife, conveyed one acre and eighty perches of land for \$50.00 to Michael Cressman, Jacob Hauck, John Connelly, and Isaac Kolb, trustees of the Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian and Mennonite congregations. The purpose of the land was ". . . to erect thereon a decent House of worship, with a grave yard for a burial place for their dead, to which the said different denominations shall have an equal and unalterable right" Where was this land? How long did the Mennonites retain their interest? The author wishes further research were possible.

⁸ Deed at Easton, G - 5 - 433.

Chapter XXXV

ROTHROCK

Washington Township, Northampton County

After examining the deeds to various Mennonite Church properties in Northampton county the author set out to find what he could of extinct congregations. The only one located is the site of the Rothrock meetinghouse. It is situated along a road which runs northward from the village of Richmond, and is about a half mile from Richmond and about three or four miles southeast of Bangor.¹

The oldest citizens around Richmond all remember and speak appreciatively of the "old Menneese"² and their meetinghouse. The meetinghouse stood on the right side of the road as one proceeds from Richmond. It was a frame building.

Old people can recall the names of only one or two ministers who had preached there—Musselman and "Haney"—likely David Henning. Mrs. Clara Illick McEwen, aged seventy-five, says that her mother (a Mrs. Illick) and herself always attended the "Menneese" services when she was small. She testified strongly that the Mennonites were good people, that they "also believed in conversion." Mrs. McEwen is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and likely had in mind the emotional meetings which were common to the Evangelical Mennonites and the Methodist Episcopal. As Mrs. McEwen remembers, services were conducted by the (Evangelical) Mennonites every two weeks and "sometimes in the evening."

About sixty years ago a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Levi Rasley, conducted a singing school in the old meetinghouse.

The cemetery is also on the right side of the road as one proceeds northward from Richmond. At one time the church grounds and cemetery were well-kept. In fact the young people of the community used to play croquet on the grounds. But today the cemetery is grown over with weeds and brush. The ground is uneven and it is very difficult to find any markers at all. At one time it was "full of tombstones." In 1915 N. B. Grubb found but three tombstones. The author could find only two, those of Leonhard Reichert (1733-1822) and his wife (d. 1807). The stone observed by Rev. Grubb was of "John Schimel, aged one year, died before 1800,"—a strange description. If the date was given, why wasn't it copied? If it wasn't given, on what did Rev. Grubb base his estimate? Perhaps the stone was, 17—.

¹ 1915 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 31. The article discusses both the Rothrock and Mount Bethel congregations. But both were in Washington township; there is no Richmond township in the county.

² Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, p. 369, says that the "Mennonists" pronounce their own denominational name as though spelled, "Menneest."

The inscription on Reichert's marker states (in German) that he was born in Germany on October 1, 1733 and died April 23, 1822. He "brought his age in this world" to eighty-eight years, six months, and twenty-two days.

The meetinghouse stood about two hundred feet south of the neglected cemetery. Where it was located there is now a pit. The meetinghouse lot and cemetery adjoined the farm of David Ettinger in 1909. Mr. Ettinger desired to purchase the meetinghouse property. So he "went to Bucks county" (says his daughter) and made arrangements to buy the property. His daughter, Mrs. Richard T. Evans, does not know the year but believed it was twenty-four or more years ago. The minutes of the spring session of 1909 of the Franconia Conference record that it was decided "That Bro. Jacob Freed who with another Brother [David M. Cassel] be a committee to go to Northampton County to sell a church property containing one-half acre ground and worth about twenty-five (\$25) Dollars. The purchaser to keep the cemetery in repair." Evidently Deacons Freed and Cassel sold the property to Ettinger. The latter seems to have never recorded the deed, and it is lost. The Ettinger property is now owned by his son-in-law, Richard T. Evans, Bangor, Pennsylvania, R. D. 2.

In 1916 Mr. Ettinger's barn burned down. He then "pulled down" the old frame meetinghouse and rebuilt it near his home, to be used as a machinery shed. The building seems to have been reassembled as it had first been built. It (now) measures about twenty-two by twenty-eight feet. It is still used to store machinery. And the cemetery is certainly not kept "in repair."

When was the meetinghouse first built? Who preached there? Where are the deeds? The history of the Rothrock Mennonite Church (the name is so given by N. B. Grubb; having neither support nor evidence to the contrary for the use of the term the author accepted it) is very largely lost.

And yet a possible identification should at least be mentioned. In Chapter XXXIV mention is made of the 1798 deed from Anna Kappes of Upper Mount Bethel township, and others, to two trustees of the congregation of Christians, called Mennonists "residing in the said Township of Upper and Lower Mountbethel and this Neighborhood" Now the present Rothrock cemetery is located near the eastern corner of Washington township. In 1798 this site would have been in Lower Mount Bethel township, —unless more recent surveys moved the dividing line between Upper and Lower Mount Bethel. Further, in 1794 (when Kappes made his will and a Mennonite meetinghouse already stood on his land) it is possible that he lived in Upper Mount Bethel township and owned a tract which extended as far into Lower Mount Bethel as the Rothrock cemetery. Again, Kappes may have lived in Upper Mount Bethel and owned a detached tract of land in Lower Mount Bethel. Further research should clear up the matter. Who will conduct it?

Chapter XXXVI

GOSHENHOPPEN

Upper Hanover Township, Montgomery County

The Perkiomen creek flows southward through the western half of Montgomery county and empties into the Schuylkill river between Royersford and Norristown. In the colonial period that part of the Perkiomen valley north of the present borough of Schwenksville was called Goshenhoppen. The lower part (nearer Schwenksville) was called Old Goshenhoppen and the region farther upstream was called New Goshenhoppen.

There was at one time a Goshenhoppen Mennonite congregation.¹ According to the historical paper of Saylor and Hoffman the Mennonites, Lutherans, and German Reformed united in building a log house of worship about a half mile northwest of Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, about 1716. Preacher Henry S. Bower wrote, "At Goshenhoppen a church was organized as early as 1717, and some Mennonites came here also from the Netherlands, settling themselves along the Perkiomen and Skippack. A church was built at Goshenhoppen by the Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites, and they gave every denomination the privilege to worship therein."

But these dates, 1716 and 1717, have no documentary support. The known facts are as follows. John Henry Sprogel, the same Sprogel who set aside a burial ground in the present Pottstown, donated a tract of land to the Reformed, Lutheran, and Mennonite denominations. The tract now lies in Upper Hanover township, Montgomery county. The date of Sprogel's gift (in Upper Hanover township) is not known. Tradition sets the date of the Reformed Church as early as 1716. But the first known communion was observed by the Reformed congregation on October 12, 1727, although this is not conclusive evidence against the earlier year.

Bean's *History* states that the original gift was six acres, and an additional fifty acres and twenty-six perches were acquired in 1749. Rev. DeLong claims the Sprogel gift was fifty acres and twenty-six perches in the very beginning but no clear title was secured, and in 1749 the fifty acres were "purchased" for ninety-five pounds. One half of the cost was paid at once and the balance on February 23, 1796, "when the deed was handed over." A third theory, apparently the true one, is that Sprogel (himself a Lutheran) donated fifty acres for church, school, and burial purposes. Hendrick Pannebecker completed the survey on April 17, 1719. George Boone was di-

¹ Christian Funk, *Spiegel fuer alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1813, p. 14; Wilmer Saylor and Clinton Hoffman in *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., April, 1931, p. 61; C. M. DeLong, *ibid.*, April, 1928, pp. 34-49; Translation of document in the archives of Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Red Hill, Pa., by H. W. Kriebel, published, *ibid.*, January, 1928, p. 21; Henry S. Bower, *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Daniel Stauffer and Hans Bauer*, Harleysville, Pa., 1897, p. 169; Theodore W. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1884, pp. 1108, 1109.

rected to prepare a deed for the property but carelessly neglected to do so. Sprogel died, and the congregation possessed no deed. John Potts drew up a paper stating Sprogel's original intention which was signed by Sprogel's widow, Pannebecker, and others. And Boone prepared an affidavit testifying that he was directed to prepare a deed but failed to do so.^{1a} "Upon this document . . . depends the title to the property upon which the present church stands."

"From a draught made by David Schultz in 1769 we learn that two acres belonged exclusively to the Lutherans on which to erect a church, two and one half to the Reformed and two to the Mennonites for similar purpose. The remaining forty-four acres were owned in common for the use of the school and burial-ground . . . Along the northern boundary line of the original Sprogel tract are two stones, . . . planted in 1769 and designating the two acres on which was to be erected a Mennonite meeting-house" (DeLong).

In the archives of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church at Red Hill there is an interesting document written by the Lutheran pastor in 1796. At that time the Lutherans were about to lose their share in the original tract, an event which they were determined to prevent at any cost. ". . . on January 29, 1796, a conference was held at the house of Mr. Gallman by representations of the Reformed, Lutheran and Mennonists fully empowered to act. In this conference, they showed the Reformed and Mennonists the justice of their demands with such evident proof, that they could no longer withstand them." The Lutherans had already built a log church on the site of the present Saint Paul's so they were content to sell their interest to the Reformed congregation for ninety pounds. Evidently the Mennonites simply allowed the Reformed Church to assume the ownership of the Mennonite share.

There is no evidence that the Mennonites ever built a meetinghouse in Upper Hanover township. But there are a number of Mennonites buried in the cemetery of what is now the New Goshenhoppen Reformed Church. As Rev. DeLong says, "It is the oldest burying-ground in Upper Montgomery County. The graves of many of the pioneers are marked with rough field stones. For some years it was a burial place for the common use of all Protestants of this region. Here we find the graves of Reformed, Lutherans, and Mennonites side by side."

As was stated above the first house of worship was a union building. Bean says, "The Lutheran congregation sold out its right, in 1796, to the Reformed for ninety pounds. The Mennonites had erected for themselves a meetinghouse in Washington Township, Berks Co., in 1741. They, however, held a burying right until a very late day." There is an implication in the quoted sentences that whatever congregational life may have been set up by Goshenhoppen Mennonites was absorbed by the Hereford Mennonite congregation in Washington township, Berks county. It is true that the

^{1a} 1517-1917 Jubilee Volume, Norristown Conference of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania . . . published by the Conference, 1917, pp. 54-56. See deed at Philadelphia, D-3-24 ff.

Hereford meetinghouse is located only five miles west of the Goshenhoppen burying ground. One more reference to the Goshenhoppen congregation must be noted.

The only known contemporary reference to the Goshenhoppen Mennonite congregation is made by Bishop Christian Funk (1731-1811). In the fall of 1809 the aged bishop wrote a polemic setting forth his version of the events which led up to his schism from the Mennonite Church. He says that he was sick at the time of the spring communion of 1777; but his co-ministers announced to the church that the (Continental War Tax of) three pounds ten shillings should not be paid. When Funk was recovering (Bishop) Andrew Ziegler (of Skippack) visited him and reported that he (Ziegler) and (Deacon Christian) Meyer (of the Franconia circuit) were at the Goshenhoppen Church and there announced that no one should pay the three pounds ten shillings.² Funk wrote this account thirty-two years later. He doesn't feel constrained to explain anything about the "Goschenhoppen . . . Gemeinde;" the reference is quite casual.

Was it a well-known fact in 1809 that there had once been a Goshenhoppen congregation? Or was an existent congregation then called Goshenhoppen? It is true that geographical names were much used at that time. Franconia was "Indian Field;" the Chester county churches were "Schuylkill;" etc. And it is also a fact that the present Hereford congregation at Bally is in the region drained by the Perkiomen creek. And the present town of Bally was once called Goshenhoppen. Funk evidently meant the Hereford Mennonite Church. But this of course does not overthrow the known connection of the Mennonites with the property of the present New Goshenhoppen Reformed Church.

² "Da ich ein wenig besser ward, kam Andreas Ziegler und sagte, er und Meyer waeren in Goschenhoppen gewesen in der Geineinde und haetten ihr vorgestellt, dass niemand die drey Pfund zehn Schillinge bezahlen sollte."

Chapter XXXVII

UNION HOUSES OF WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

It would be interesting to make a thorough search of the seven counties in which the Franconia Conference has had meetinghouses to ascertain all the places at which the Mennonites have united with other groups in building houses of worship. But this would require considerable time. For example, the cemetery of Apple's Church (Lutheran-Reformed) near Hellertown, has a number of gravestones with the following surnames, Gross, Swartz, Frankenfield, Bachman, Weaver, Ruth, Clemmer, Ott, Roth, and Wagner. Most of these interments were made after 1850. Were the Mennonites ever in union at Apple's Church? Or were these Lutheran and Reformed descendants of Mennonites?

A number of churches in which the Mennonites had a part are here listed. It is impossible to know which group of Mennonites is involved when Mennonites are associated in erecting union churches after 1847.

HELLERTOWN

Near the borough of Hellertown, once in Lower Saucon township, Bucks county, later Northampton county, but now within the present limits of the city of Bethlehem, stands a building which is locally known as the Limekiln schoolhouse. The building is no longer used for school purposes. A bachelor makes his home there. A transcript of the fifty-four legible tombstones in the adjoining cemetery is to be found in the Library of the Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown. The location of the cemetery is described thus, "On [the] western side of Saucon creek, and along the eastern side of the public road leading to Bethlehem, Pa., nearly opposite across the Saucon Creek from the Hellertown blast furnaces."

The deed to the first grant of land was apparently never recorded. But a copy of it has been published.¹ And when the deed was made there was already a cemetery there. The first deed was granted by John, Peter, and Henry Kram, sons of the deceased Jacob Kram, and his daughters, Susana Kram and Catarina Rigel. Jacob Kram's heirs recite the story of their act in the deed. Their late father desired to grant sixty-four perches of land, ". . . at the Northwest corner of his mill land Beginning in the graveyard . . . unto the menoist and Baptice Societice for to Build a house thereon for Keeping School and Buplic worship therein and also for a graveyard for the Said Societice and other neighbours which will chose to Burying their Deat (which Diet a Christian Death,) therein and to hold a Burial Sermon in the said School house."

¹ *History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, by a Committee, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1915, pp. 284-289.

Jacob Kram neglected attending to the matter. On his deathbed he disposed of all his lands but forgot in "the hart paine of his Sickness," to mention the graveyard. But his children desired to convey the land to the two denominations. Evidently they also tended to procrastinate, for two of the sons died intestate before the deed was given. Finally on April 1, 1802 the five remaining children, knowing that their late brothers Jacob and Abraham "would have Done the Same," conveyed the sixty-four perches to "Samuel Kauffman . . . in trust and behalf of the Said menoist Societice and unto Samuel Rothdrok . . . of the Said Baptic Societice . . ."

On April 26, 1802 Isaac Rothrock, and Cathrout his wife, of Lower Saucon township granted forty-eight perches of land to "Samuel Rothrock^{1a} and Samuel Kauffman^{1b} of the same place . . . Agents and Trustees, on the part of the Baptist and Menonist Societies . . . for a Grave Yard . . . which . . . shall be free to all other Persuasions . . . to inter their Dead in who Die a natural Death, and . . . for a House . . . for the purposes of a Meeting and school house . . ." The land was granted ". . . in consideration of their approving these laudable Designs of the said Baptist and Menonist Societies . . . and in further consideration of the sum of Two Dollars."²

A stone in the building states,

LIMEKILN
SCHOOL HOUSE

Built 1802
Burned and Rebuilt 1854
Rebuilt 1891

Residents in the community say a Sunday school, probably Lutheran and Reformed, was conducted in the building about forty years ago; and prior to that there had been preaching services.

Did the Mennonites ever have preaching services there? The late Francis W. Bechtel, Esq., of Pottsville stated^{2a} that Preacher Samuel Bechtel (d. 1802) preached at Hellertown, while he lived near by, from about 1750 until (he moved to the present Landis Brothers farm, Telford, in) 1764. And Anna Geissinger of Hellertown, a ninety-year old Mennonite, and granddaughter of a bishop, says, "Sie hen dat gebredigt," — "They used to preach there." But Benjamin Hottel (1850-), a Dunkard preacher of Coopersburg, cannot remember of any preaching services there. He referred to the place as Rothrocks' schoolhouse.

If the original grantor and even two of his sons died before 1802 it is entirely possible that there was a meetinghouse there before the 1802 building and that the Bechtel family tradition is correct. (Jacob Krum and Jacob Krum, Junior, of Lower Saucon township are listed in the 1790 census).

^{1a} Tombstone states, 1761-1838.

^{1b} Tombstone states, 1767-1841.

² Deed at Easton, E - 15 - 570.

^{2a} According to Mr. Geo. F. P. Wanger of Pottstown.

In 1915 there was a Rev. Rothrock living in Lansdale who as a boy had helped make preparations in the schoolhouse for two funerals. The school desks were removed and the church benches brought down from the attic — as the agreement had been made when the building was first handed over to the school directors. Local people say the building “can’t be sold.”

Among the names on the stones of the cemetery are, Rothrock, Derr, Kaufman, Weber, Heller, Weinick, Kram, Guth, Hillegas, Geissinger, Neukommer, and Roth. The most numerous are Rothrocks and Hellers. The oldest legible stones are of “Migel” Weber and Friedrich Weber, both of whom died in 1769. One stone bears the date 1775; two, 1776; one, 1796, etc. The cemetery is enclosed by a stone wall. The bachelor in the schoolhouse claims he mows the cemetery with a scythe.

In 1790 the following surnames are found on the census lists of the heads of families in Lower Saucon township, Northampton county, Road, Paghman, Lantes, Weaver, Grose, Shnyder, Grof, Boyer, Derr, Crader, Gisinger, Heabner, and Pare.³

ALMONT

WEST ROCKHILL TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY

Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church was built at Schlichter’s (now Almont) in 1826. But a schoolhouse had been erected there as early as 1800. “The Mennonites . . . met here for worship quite frequently . . .”^{3a} An influential citizen, Henry Boetel, urged the erection of a union house of worship in 1826. The building committee consisted of John Nase, Lutheran; Abraham Trumbore, Reformed; and John Kinsey, Mennonite. They erected a stone structure, thirty-six by forty-four feet in size, at a cost of \$1800. Enos Schlichter, Senior, donated the land on which the church was built.⁴ The cornerstone was laid on Ascension Day, 1826, and the dedication took place on Christmas Day.

It is not known how regularly the Mennonites conducted services at the Jerusalem Church. John D. Souder says that Preacher John Allebach (1805-1902) of Rockhill preached there regularly. The last Mennonite to preach there in Mennonite services was Henry S. Bower (1836-1909) of Salford.

In 1881 Jerusalem Church was rebuilt by the Reformed and the Lutherans. In 1885 the Lutheran pastor, Rev. Berkemeyer secured a release of the rights of Mennonites by a signature of “The Mennonite Bishop.”^{4a}

Hundredth anniversary services were conducted in the Jerusalem Church on October 10, 13, and 17, 1926. The Lutherans conducted the services on October 10 and the Reformed on October 17. On Wednesday evening, October 13, Mahlon Gross of the Doylestown Mennonite Church

³ *Heads of Families in Pennsylvania* . . . 1790, Washington, 1908, pp. 173-174.

^{3a} J. H. Battle, *History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1887, p. 621.

⁴ Allen S. Fisher, *Lutheranism in Bucks County, 1734-1934, 1935*; pp. 61-63.

^{4a} *Ibid.*, p. 63. A vain effort was made to learn the identity of this bishop.

preached, assisted by Preacher I. Frank Swartz of Blooming Glen. James B. Derstine led the congregation, chiefly Rockhill Mennonites, in the singing of old hymns suitable for the historic occasion. Once more the old denominational union was revived, but only for one service.

Among the surnames found on the tombstones of Jerusalem cemetery are Kinsey, Freed, Souder, Derstine, Clemmer, Stover, Detweiler, and Moyer.⁵

The Kinsey family set aside a lot along the Ridge Road about three-fourths of a mile east of Almont, as a burying ground. It is claimed that John Kinsey hoped for the day when a Mennonite meetinghouse would stand along the Ridge Road. With this end in mind he donated a lot of land to the trustees of the Rockhill Mennonite Church. But his dream was never realized. The Ridge Road Mennonite meetinghouse was never built. Even the body of Kinsey was exhumed and reinterred in the Rockhill burial ground. The trustees sold the lot he had donated and the history was almost lost.⁵

RIDGE VALLEY

WEST ROCKHILL TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY

A log schoolhouse on the site of the present Reformed Church at Ridge Valley was used for church and school purposes from at least as early as 1792 until 1833, when it was renovated. The deed of December 12, 1792 conveyed the land to "the Lutheran and Reformed Calvinist societies."⁶ "It is possible that the Mennonites also shared in the use of this school house."⁷ In 1854 the three congregations, Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites united in the erection of a union church.⁷ The building committee consisted of Jonathan Cressman (Lutheran); Jesse Hoot (Reformed); and Jacob Roth (Mennonite). The cornerstone was laid May 25, 1854. The building cost \$2,000, exclusive of donated labor and materials.

There is no written record of any (Franconia Conference) Mennonite services at Ridge Valley. But Hiram Barndt (b. 1858) of Tylersport is positive that services were at one time conducted there by the Mennonites. The old residents used to tell him of the Mennonite services. When pressed for the name of a Mennonite preacher who preached there he hesitatingly suggested perhaps "Mose" Gottshall was a preacher whom old folks named! Moses Gottshall was a General Conference Mennonite, ordained in 1847. His congregation was at Schwenksville, ten or twelve miles from Ridge Valley. The minutes of the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonites in 1881 include a record of the resumption of services at Ridge Valley. The work was probably soon discontinued. At least in 1886 Conference decided to discontinue the services at Ridge Valley "for the next six months."

There is an old burial ground in the Ridge Valley community which ought to be mentioned. To reach it one proceeds west from Tylersport on

⁵ John D. Souder furnished this information.

⁶ Battle, *op. cit.*, p. 620.

⁷ Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

the Ridge Road for one mile, turns right at the crossroads and one-tenth of a mile from the Ridge Road, on the left side of the road, one finds the old cemetery. The farm on which it is located is now owned by Frederick Klumpp; earlier owners were Dr. Milton Acker and Jacob Dietz. No one knows who is buried there. All the stones are field stones with no legible inscriptions. The old residents claim that the present road was cut through the cemetery and bones were found during its construction.

APPLEBACHSVILLE

HAYCOCK TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY

A union church was built at Applebachsville in 1855. The church was then called, "The German Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed and Mennonite Church."⁸ But Fisher states that there is no record that the Mennonites ever held regular services in the church. The names of the building committee are odd, Paul Applebach, Joseph Mann, William Applebach, John Sames, and Jared Apple. Perhaps the Mennonites involved in the work at Applebachsville were General Conference Mennonites.

SPRINGTOWN

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, BUCKS COUNTY

The present Lutheran Church at Springtown is only a few miles north of the Springfield Mennonite meetinghouse where both groups of Mennonites have worshiped since 1847. "The corner stone for 'Christ's Church of Springtown' was laid on May 18th, 1872, being a joint effort of the Lutherans, the Reformed and the Mennonites of the community . . . the Mennonites discontinued their services and consequently their rights at this point some time in the past."⁹ Perhaps these were also General Conference Mennonites.

SOUTH PERKASIE

BUCKS COUNTY

As early as 1866 a number of people in Bridgetown (an old name for South Perkasio; another was "Benjamin") decided to erect a union church. Stephen Young, a Lutheran, called a meeting of interested men at his home. At a second meeting a committee to solicit funds was appointed. "This effort was among the Lutherans and the Reformed, tho the Mennonites of the community were also active and actually purchased the lot which the Lutherans and the Reformed had in view."¹⁰ It is doubtful if the Mennonites had any relations with the two congregations beyond helping to erect the church.

⁸ Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

DUBLIN

BUCKS COUNTY

The Dublin Union Church was built in 1869. Here also the Mennonites assisted their neighbors to erect their church. "Funds for the building of a church were raised by holding musical concerts, etc., in which people of the community shared, even Mennonites as far east as Plumsteadville."¹¹

One is compelled to marvel at the apparent eagerness of the Mennonites to help Lutherans and Reformed build their churches. Is it a mark of denominational lukewarmness or an evidence of Christian charity? Rev. Fisher says, "During his pastorate (Rev. Fluck's, 1913-1921), the congregation made considerable progress, and numerical growth, largely thru accessions from the Mennonites." Denominational narrowness should be discouraged, of course, but each denomination should cultivate denominational loyalty to a sufficient extent to keep its young people in their own church.

¹¹ Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

Part Three

MINISTERIAL LIST

MINISTERIAL LIST

of the

FRANCONIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE

This list is conservatively compiled. There are a number of men, probably ordained, who are omitted because no positive evidence of their being ordained could be found. For such men, consult the index. Names are usually given in their modern spelling. If the man's own signature has been seen or other evidence indicates how he spelled his name, that form follows in parenthesis.

A few abbreviations are used: "c." for "about" (with dates), "B" for Bishop, "M" for Minister, "D" for Deacon, "b." for born, "m." for married, and "d." for died.

ACKERMAN, GEORGE (AKERMAN). M

He was serving in the Swamp district in 1773.

ALDERFER, ISAAC, 1773-1842. M

b. October 7, 1773. m. first, Hannah Oberholtzer, and second, her sister, Elizabeth. One child was born to his first wife and seven to the second. He was ordained at Salford by c. 1830, perhaps earlier. Farmer. d. November 8, 1842.

ALDERFER, REIN A., 1877- . M

b. October 20, 1877 at his present residence. m. Susan A. Alderfer March 15, 1902. They have eight children. Farmer. Ordained at Salford May 27, 1915.

ALLEBACH, CHRISTIAN B., 1841-1917. M

b. August 4, 1841 in Rockhill twp., Bucks co. m. Amanda K. Krupp June 25, 1868. They had three children. Farmer and carriage painter. Ordained at Towamencin June 29, 1876. d. November 1, 1917.

ALLEBACH, DAVID G., 1802-1888. D

b. July 18, 1802 in Skippack twp., Montgomery co. m. Catharine Hunsicker November 14, 1826. Six children were born to them. Farmer. Ordained as the first known deacon at Towamencin c. 1832. Signed the Skippack alms book. d. July 25, 1888.

ALLEBACH, DAVID H., 1839-1879. D

Son of the above; b. June 25, 1839. m. Sarah Kulp January 19, 1867. They were the parents of five children. Farmer. Ordained at Towamencin to assist his father, but he died before his father did. d. April 3, 1879.

ALLEBACH, JOHN, 1805-1902. D, M

b. March 21, 1805. m. Elizabeth, daughter of Preacher John Bergey of Franconia, in 1826; seven children were born to them, among whom were Preacher Christian of Towamencin and Deacon Joseph of Rockhill. Ordained deacon at Rockhill c. 1847 and preacher at the same

place c. 1849. Farmer. At the age of ninety-two he fractured a leg which healed, to the great surprise of everyone. d. February 12, 1902.

ALLEBACH, JOSEPH B., 1844-1923. D

b. June 9, 1844. m. Urey Gulick. They were the parents of six children. Farmer. Ordained at Rockhill in the fall of 1880. He was the first deacon at Rockhill to stand to read Scripture in the service. d. April 24, 1923.

ANGLEMOYER, HENRY G., 1859-1908. M

b. January 6, 1859. m. Katie C. Kratz on November 29, 1879. Shoemaker. Ordained at Blooming Glen November 22, 1900. First regular English preacher there. d. November 2, 1908.

BAER, HENRY. M

Ordained in 1771 in the Swamp district.

BARTOLET, HENRY (HEINRICH BERTOLET), 1796-1853. M

b. September 11, 1796. m. first, Elizabeth Reiff who bore him six children; second, Mary Detweiler who gave birth to three children; and third, a Miss Rosenberry. Farmer. Ordained at Skippack by 1836. Published one issue of a (monthly) periodical. d. November 2, 1853.

BEAN, HENRY, 1730-1816. M (?)

D. K. Cassel says he was a preacher at Skippack. According to a transcript of the cemetery he was born in 1730 and died April 1, 1816. He may not have served very long.¹

BEAN, HENRY, JR. (BIEN), 1787-1853. M

Son of Henry, Sr. b. October 3, 1787. Signed the Skippack alms book 1824-1830. Was deposed from the ministry. d. August 20, 1853. (These dates are also taken from the cemetery transcript.)

BEAN, WARREN G., 1866- B

b. February 7, 1866 in Skippack twp. m. Annie W. Kulp June 4, 1887. They have six children. He attended the spring terms of Ursinus College in 1885 and 1886 and secured a Provisional Teacher's Certificate, but never taught. Ordained to the ministry June 15, 1897 and ordained bishop at Skippack November 16, 1909.

BEARY, CHRISTIAN (BÜRY), 1769-1832. M

b. July 11, 1769. m. Barbara ————. Preacher John S. Kriebel has a German exegetical commentary and in one of the volumes is written, "Christian Biery, Prediger; Jacob Latschaw, Prediger; Andrew Mack, Prediger." The commentary has been handed down among the preachers of the district. Beary's "home" church was apparently Coventry, where he is buried. He died December 21, 1832.

BECHTEL, ABRAHAM, 1749-1815. M

b. November 26, 1749. m. Margaretha Clemens; six children, one of whom was Bishop John C. Preached at Hereford. d. March 22, 1815.

¹ On what grounds does Cassel infer that he was a preacher (Cassel Family History, p. 269)?

BECHTEL, GEORGE (HANS GEORGE BECHTEL), d. 1759. M

Was a minister in the Palatinate in 1727 according to a letter from Holland written on May 20 of that year. Emigrated to America in 1728 on the ship *Mortonhouse*, arriving at Philadelphia on August 23. Naturalized next day. Farmer and weaver. m. Maria ———; seven children. Preached at Hereford until his death. His family Bible is now owned by Aaron L. Bauer of Pottstown. Bought 98 acres from Henry Stauffer on March 20, 1734. Applied to the Penn brothers for a patent for it on March 23, 1750. He had also purchased an additional 40 acres of Stauffer in 1734. d. March 19, 1759. His death and that of his cominister, Peter Moll, occurred only twelve hours apart.

BECHTEL, HANS JACOB (JACOB BEGHTLY), d. 1739. M

Emigrated from Europe to America c. 1720. Settled on 366 acres which he purchased of Ludwig Christian Sprogel on October 8, 1720. This tract is the present "Ringing Rocks farm" about two miles north of Pottstown. m. Elizabeth ———; four children. Subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith at the 1725 Conference. Naturalized in February, 1730. Preached at Hereford and for the other Mennonites of the "Manatant" region. d. 1739.

BECHTEL, HENRY G., 1878- M

b. April 24, 1878 near Boyertown. When about a year old his mother moved with him to Spring City. m. Emma G. Huber of Lancaster, December 12, 1901. Six children were born to them. Farmer. Ordained November 3, 1914 at Vincent. He is a grandson of Preacher John B. Bechtel of Hereford.

BECHTEL, JACOB, 1769-1838. D (?)

A native of Chester county. Emigrated to Blair county, Ontario, Canada, in 1800. Evidently a deacon when he emigrated. (Information from L. J. Burkholder).

BECHTEL, JOHN, d. 1795. M, B (?)

Son of Preacher George whom he succeeded at Hereford. Farmed near Clayton, in Hereford twp. Four children. d. 1795. Possibly a bishop.

BECHTEL, JOHN B., 1807-1889. M

b. March 7, 1807; grandson of Preacher Abraham. m. Mary Long-acre; eight children. Ordained in November, 1848, to succeed Christian Clemmer, in the Hereford congregation. d. June 5, 1889.

BECHTEL, JOHN C., 1779-1843. B

Son of Abraham. b. September 9, 1779. m. Elizabeth High; six children. Ordained preacher at Hereford in 1816 and bishop in 1830. d. May 2, 1843.

BECHTEL, JOHN S., 1786-1868. D

b. February 21, 1786. m. Mary, daughter of Deacon Philip High; six children. Served at Hereford. d. March 8, 1868.

BECHTEL, MARTIN, 1710-1786. B

b. in January, 1710; son of Hans Jacob. m. Elizabeth Ricker; ten children were born to them. He was ordained preacher for the Chester county churches in 1739. In the same year he inherited his father's 214-acre farm along the Schuylkill, and added more land to it. He operated a ferry across the Schuylkill. In 1758 he was ordained bishop. His name is found on two cemetery transcripts. He was evidently first buried in the Sprogel lot (in Pottstown) and over a century later reinterred at Coventry. d. August 25, 1786; aged 76 years, 7 months, and 3 days.

BECHTEL, SAMUEL, d. 1802. M

Brother of the above. m. Maria Oberholtzer. In 1751 he was living near Coopersburg and was one of the preachers and trustees of the Saucon Church. He had moved from Hanover twp. to Upper Saucon twp. in 1748. It is claimed that he also preached at Hellertown from about 1750 until 1764. In 1764 he bought the present Landis Brothers' farm and moved there. He then preached at the Rockhill Church. He signed the first audit in the Franconia alms book in 1767 and continued to sign until 1796. He and his wife gave the Rockhill trustees their first deed. He died January 15, 1802, and is buried at Rockhill.

BEIDEMAN, ISAAC B., 1863- D

b. in Worcester twp., Montgomery co., March 25, 1863. He first married Mary S., sister of Preacher I. Frank Swartz, on December 1, 1883. To this union nine children were born. On May 19, 1925 he married Mary Catherine Walters. Harness maker and farmer. Ordained at Worcester on October 23, 1928.

BEIDLER, ENOS, 1835-1918. M

b. February 11, 1835. m. Nancy Moyer March 23, 1862; seven children. Ordained at Swamp November 3, 1886. Farmer. Never accepted his office. d. January 5, 1918.

BEIDLER, JACOB, 1809-1874. M

b. January 11, 1809. Was ordained at Swamp after the division of 1847. He served 26 years. On January 6, 1874 he died suddenly of apoplexy while crossing a field.

BEIDLER, JESSE J. (BEITLER ?), 1805-1863. M

b. in West Pikeland twp. Chester co., February 4, 1805. m. 1) Elizabeth Detweiler; 2) Catherine Rohr; 3) Elizabeth Weisner. Both his first and second wives bore him four children. Preacher at Diamond Rock and Phoenixville. Went with Oberholtzer in the division of 1847 but later returned ("in a year or two") to the Franconia Conference. Farmer. Lost his right hand in a threshing machine November 3, 1853. d. April 13, 1863 and was buried at Diamond Rock.

BEIDLER, JOHN A., 1840-1912. M

Son of Jacob. b. February 1, 1840. Ordained at Swamp September 12, 1874 to succeed his father. d. June 3, 1912.

BENNER, JACOB. D

The first deacon of the Flatland congregation which erected their first meetinghouse in 1837. An old man, a son of Flatland's first preacher, thought Benner was ordained in 1842. Benner went with Oberholtzer in 1847.

BERGEY, CLAYTON, 1878- D (M)

b. at Blooming Glen March 31, 1878. m. Amanda Hendricks May 10, 1898. They became the parents of five children. Ordained deacon at Doylestown June 5, 1902. Moved to Fentress, Virginia, April 1, 1910, where he was ordained preacher September 4, 1922.

BERGEY, JOHN, 1759-1841. M

b. in Franconia twp. December 15, 1759. m. Catherine Hunsicker September 6, 1791; fourteen children. Began signing the Franconia alms book in 1779. d. September 12, 1841 and was buried at Franconia.

BERGEY, JOHN, 1783-1865. M

b. in Lower Salford twp. August 23, 1783. m. Elizabeth D. Oberholtzer April 15, 1808; six children. "Noted for his conscientious administration of his office and his earnest sermons." d. December 6, 1865 and was buried at Salford where he preached.

BERGEY, VINCENT K., 1884- D

b. at his present residence December 26, 1884. m. Maggie M. Landis February 15, 1908; eight children. Farmer. Ordained at Franconia January 2, 1934.

BISHOP, MELVIN A., 1893- M

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., February 28, 1893. m. Margaret H. Benner December 28, 1912; five children. Factory hand; driver of baker-truck. Ordained at Blooming Glen May 27, 1930.

BLEAM, CHRISTIAN (BLIEHM). M

Served in the Swamp district, probably in the early part of the nineteenth century.

BOWER, HENRY S., 1836-1909. M

b. in East Coventry twp., Chester co., January 12, 1836. m. 1) Annie S. Reiff, October 18, 1857; 2) Catherine Alderfer (nee Saylor) February 3, 1888. His first wife bore him eight children. Ordained at Salford November 30, 1865. Watchmaker and farmer. Author, *A Genealogical Record of the Descendants of Daniel Stauffer and Hans Bauer*, Harleysville, Pa., 1897. He was the leading man in arousing conviction for a more general observance of foot washing than was then practiced. d. April 8, 1909 and was buried at Upper Skippack, the church of his first wife.

BOWMAN, JOHN (BAUMAN), 1801-1883. D

According to the testimony of one, Jacob B. Bechtel, in the Berks co. court in 1880 there was a Hereford deacon, John Bauman, who left the Franconia Conference in the division of 1847. A Deacon, John Bau-

man, united with Oberholtzer's Conference in May, 1848. In the Hereford cemetery there is buried a Johannes M. Bauman, born November 4, 1801; died January 28, 1883.

BOYER, JOHN, 1762-1828. M

b. January 10, 1762. Ordained at Hereford in 1795, according to Mary L. Bower. m. Susanna Z. Bauer; ten children. In 1814 moved to Harmony, Butler co., Pa. d. June 1, 1828.

BUCKWALTER, DAVID, 1809-1891. M

b. October 9, 1809. m. 1) Magdalena Halteman; 2) a Mrs. Halteman. Farmer in East Vincent twp., Chester co. Carpenter and undertaker. Ordained for Vincent and Coventry c. 1854. d. March 10, 1891 and was buried at Vincent.

BUCKWALTER, JOHN, 1749-1835. M

b. July 12, 1749. m. 1) Mary —————; 2) Elizabeth —————. Father of fourteen children. Lived in Charlestown twp., Chester co., and succeeded Bishop Matthias Pennypacker as preacher at Phoenixville and Charlestown. d. January 8, 1835 and was buried at Phoenixville.

CASSEL, DAVID M., 1839-1922. D

b. October 24, 1839. m. Amanda Kriebel October 17, 1863; seven children. Farmer. Ordained at Plain November 21, 1901. d. November 21, 1922.

CASSEL, HENRY (HEINRICH). D

Ordained at Germantown on March 22, 1708.

CASSEL, HUPERT, 1775-1847. D

b. February 2, 1775. m. Catherine, daughter of Bishop Isaac Kolb; seven children. Farmer in Towamencin twp., Montgomery co. He was a deacon at Plain. He is mentioned as treasurer in the Franconia alms book in 1841. d. June 9, 1847.

CASSEL, ISAAC, 1746-1823. M

b. August 21, 1746. m. 1) Barbara Detweiler on October 20, 1768; 2) Magdalena Kolb on August 13, 1801. Six children were born to his first wife. Began signing the Skippack alms book in 1774. Served in the Skippack circuit. d. September 2, 1823.

CASSEL, JOHN (JOHANNES KASSEL). D

Served in the Skippack circuit. Began signing the alms audits in 1767 and signed the last time in 1795. He was the treasurer from 1771-1784 inclusive.

CASSEL, JOSEPH, 1799-1868. M

b. March 17, 1799. m. Catherine Metz; thirteen children, one of whom was Deacon David M. Farmer and undertaker in Towamencin twp., Montgomery co. Served the Plain Church, succeeding John Krupp (1779-1842). d. September 20, 1868.

- CASSEL, JULIUS (YILLES KASSEL), d. c. 1750. M
 Came to America on the ship, *Friendship*, which arrived at Philadelphia October 16, 1727. Farmed at Skippack where he preached. Signed the first audit in the alms book in 1738. d. c. 1750.
- CLEMENS, ISAAC K., 1813-1895. M
 b. March 1, 1813. m. Mary Clemens June 16, 1836; two children. Farmer. Ordained at Salford January 27, 1853. d. June 6, 1895.
- CLEMENS, JACOB C., 1874-. M
 b. in Franconia twp. April 2, 1874. m. Hanna C. Rittenhouse May 27, 1899; six children, one of whom, Ernest R., is the treasurer of the Franconia Historical Society. School teacher for twelve years, bank teller for six years, and farmer since 1912. Attended the summer sessions of Sumneytown (Pa.) Academy and Perkiomen Seminary, Pennsburg, Pa., from c. 1890-1895 (the first five sessions were at Sumneytown Academy). Has a Permanent Teacher's Certificate. Ordained at Plain November 14, 1906. Appointed the first secretary of the Franconia Conference in 1909. Member of the Mennonite Publication Board and of the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference. Has labored as an evangelist for the last twenty years in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and Ontario.
- CLEMMER, ABRAHAM D., 1834-1918. D
 b. January 22, 1834. m. Elizabeth Delp. Lived all his life on the old Clemmer farm in Franconia township. Ordained at Franconia in 1879. d. January 27, 1918.
- CLEMMER, ABRAHAM G., 1867-. B
 b. April 26, 1867 in Franconia twp. Stopped attending school at 17 but in 1886 won a spelling contest at a Local Institute and received a dictionary which he studied diligently. m. Hannah A. Alderfer November 2, 1889. Five children were born to them but only one survives. Two sons, Jacob and Abraham drowned May 5, 1906. Farmer. Ordained preacher at Franconia June 2, 1904, and bishop, November 20, 1913. Served on a committee for camp visitation and governmental contacts during the World War. He is a grandson of Deacon Abraham M. Clemmer and a great-grandson of Bishop Jacob Gottshall of Franconia.
- CLEMMER, ABRAHAM M., 1793-1879. D
 b. March 22, 1793. m. Catharine, daughter of Deacon (?) Isaac Derstine of Rockhill; ten children. Farmer in Franconia twp. Ordained at Franconia June 15, 1839. Went to Harrisburg on behalf of the Mennonites and their nonresistant position during the Civil War. d. January 18, 1879. His son Elihu (b. 1842) is still living.
- CLEMMER, CHRISTIAN G., 1813-1883. M
 b. in Hereford, Berks co., February 8, 1813. m. Barbara, daughter of Preacher John Gehman, in 1838; five children. Farmer. Ordained at

Hereford November 17, 1842. Went with Oberholtzer in 1847. d. March 9, 1883.

CLEMMER, HENRY M., 1849-1936. D, M

b. November 12, 1849. m. Mary Ellen Kulp February 9, 1878; five children. Cigar maker, then carpenter, finally a farmer. Ordained deacon at Salford November 14, 1888; and preacher October 22, 1908. He attended school two or three months each year until he was fourteen years old, and attended a four-month term at the age of seventeen. Last German preacher at Salford. d. November 23, 1936.

CLEMMER, HIRAM D., 1857-1933. D

Son of Abraham D. b. November 11, 1857. m. Emaline K. Moyer; five children. Farmer. Ordained deacon at Franconia October 22, 1914. d. October 29, 1933.

CLEMMER, ISAAC M., 1858-1925. D

b. September 13, 1858. m. Annie D. Moyer; six children. Farmer. Ordained at Salford June 3, 1909 to succeed his brother, Henry, who had been called to the ministry. d. February 25, 1925.

CLEMMER, JOSIAH S. (JOSIA), 1827-1905. B

b. May 1, 1827 in Franconia twp. m. 1) Sarah A. Kulp, on November 9, 1851; 2) Lydia Derstine, December 24, 1884. Eight children were born to his first wife. Ordained preacher at Franconia November 8, 1860 (This was a Tuesday, and is written in his Bible. But his tombstone states November 9.) Ordained bishop at Franconia in December, 1867. Farmer. Two letters to him from John F. Funk have been preserved. One (1873) is short and mentions the plight of the Russian Mennonites and their proposed emigration. The other letter (1878) is very lengthy and deals with evening meetings, English preaching, prayer meetings, etc. Funk attempts to maintain the confidence of Clemmer but is somewhat on the defensive. Clemmer was an able preacher and an influential leader. It is claimed that he took texts from the Old Testament Apocrypha, and also had his sermon outline imposed on parts of the meetinghouse. d. June 28, 1905.

CLEMMER, MARKLEY H., 1911- M

b. September 12, 1911. Attended high school one semester and Lansdale (Pa.) School of Business two years. Was baptized in the Souder-ton meetinghouse. Painter. m. Miriam W., daughter of Deacon Charles Kolb of Vincent, on September 12, 1933; two children. In 1935 he transferred his membership to the Vincent congregation. Was ordained pastor of the Norristown Mission congregation on November 10, 1936 at the Franconia meetinghouse.²

² This ordination represented a new step in the Franconia Conference. The October 1, 1936 session authorized the ordination of a pastor for the Norristown Mission. On October 16 the five bishops of the conference, the five executive committee members of the Mission Board and the two field workers of the Mission Board (Jacob M. Moyer and Amos Kolb) met at the home of A. G. Clemmer to

CLEMMER VALENTINE (VELTE KLEMMER). B
Ordained preacher and bishop in Europe. Came to America in 1717. Settled in the Swamp district. Attended the 1725 conference. It is claimed that he died in Lancaster county while there on church business and was buried at a cemetery believed to have been Mellingers.

CONRAD, JOHN (CONERADS), 1681-1758. M
b. June 6, 1681. m. Alitie, daughter of Cornelius Tiesen (or was this the wife of his father?). Attended the 1725 conference as a minister from Germantown. d. 1758 and was buried at Germantown. (1913 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 30.).

DELP, HENRY K., 1883- D
b. August 16, 1883 near Orvilla, Montgomery co. m. Margaret K., daughter of Bishop Joseph G. Ruth, March 14, 1911; three children. Farmer. Ordained at Lexington October 31, 1922.

DERSTINE, ABRAHAM Z., 1867- M
b. in Franconia twp., December 11, 1867. m. first, Annie G. Derstine on December 15, 1888; second, Susan R. Landes on September 10, 1933. Five children were born to his first wife. Farmer, now retired. Ordained at Franconia July 20, 1911.

DERSTINE, GEORGE, 1770-1837. M
b. November 16, 1770, son of Deacon (?) Isaac. Lived on the Derstines' homestead where Derstine Brothers now reside. Served Rockhill as a preacher. d. (intestate) March 24, 1837.

DERSTINE, ISAAC, 1744-1799. D (?)
Son of Deacon Michael. b. in 1744. m. Catharine, daughter of Hans George Delp, the immigrant. Inherited the Derstine Mill property. Father of eleven children. Signed the Franconia alms book in 1784. In his will he devised five pounds to his congregation. d. November 14, 1799 and was buried at Rockhill where he evidently served. He may have been succeeded as deacon by his son, Isaac (1774-1821), but this is only a conjecture (see p. 157).

DERSTINE, JOHN L., 1864-1932. D
b. in Plumstead twp., Bucks co., on February 11, 1864. m. Lydia M. Mill on November 6, 1886; ten children. Farmer. Ordained at Deep Run June 11, 1896. d. February 9, 1932.

DERSTINE, MICHAEL (MICHAEL DIERSTEIN), 1712-1777. D
b. in Europe in 1712. Emigrated from the Palatinate to America on the ship *Samuel* in 1732, landing at Philadelphia August 11. m. Agnes, daughter of Deacon (?) Jacob Kolb of Skippack; eleven children,

nominate men for this position. This nominating committee of twelve had in turn been open to receive suggested names of qualified brethren from the ministry of any congregation of the Conference, or from any layman. Four brethren passed through the lot. They represented the following congregations, Doylestown, Lexington, Rockhill, and Vincent.

seven of whom are mentioned in his will. Weaver, miller, and farmer. Ancestor of a large family in southeastern Pennsylvania and elsewhere. First deacon at Rockhill. Signed the first audit in 1767 in the Franconia alms book. d. June 6, 1777; buried at Rockhill.

DETWEILER, ALFRED A., 1897- . M

b. July 15, 1897. Great-grandson of Preacher Jacob. m. Marietta C. Freed on January 3, 1917; two daughters. Factory employee, later marketman. Ordained at Rockhill August 7, 1923.³

DETWEILER, BENJAMIN M., 1793-1868. D

b. June 3, 1793. m. Magdalena Moyer. Served "many years" at Salford. d. March 22, 1868.

DETWEILER, GEORGE, 1799-1883. M

b. May 14, 1799. m. Catharine Detweiler on December 2, 1822. Ordained at Skippack on August 17, 1848. d. June 13, 1883.

DETWEILER, ISAAC F., 1876- . M

b. July 24, 1876 in Hilltown twp., Bucks co. m. Ella B. Detweiler on December 9, 1899; two children. Store clerk. Served on the Franconia Mission Board from its organization until 1935. Ordained at Rockhill September 4, 1934. Brother of Deacon John F., III.

DETWEILER, JACOB, 1795-1879. M

b. on the old Detweiler farm near Sellersville on February 9, 1795. m. Catherine Clemmer; six children. Farmer. Ordained at Rockhill in 1840. Couldn't preach very well (seldom spoke more than a few minutes), but his pleasing personality was helpful in his pastoral work. Signed an audit in the Franconia alms book in 1850. d. of cancer July 13, 1879, and was buried at Rockhill.

DETWEILER, JOHN F., 1786-1864. D

b. September 29, 1786; grandson of Bishop Christian Funk. m. Anna Detweiler; sixteen children. Farmer. Likely ordained before 1827 when he is mentioned in a Rockhill Church deed. Seceded with Oberholtzer in 1847 but returned to the Franconia Conference within a few years. d. August 14, 1864 and was buried at Rockhill.

DETWEILER, JOHN F., 1807-1880. D

b. September 16, 1807. m. first, Anna D., daughter of the above; second, Sarah Detweiler, nee Hackman; six children to first wife and one to the second wife. Farmer. Succeeded his father and Samuel Souder at Rockhill. d. January 3, 1880.

DETWEILER, JOHN F., 1867- . D

b. December 19, 1867, son of Bishop Samuel and grandson of Deacon John F., II. m. Clara Rickert on December 28, 1889; six children. Farmer and marketman, now retired. Ordained at Rockhill May 23, 1916. President of the Board of Trustees of the Eastern Mennonite Home.

³ Inactive ministerially since November 27, 1930.

DETWEILER, SAMUEL D., 1841-1917. B
b. April 8, 1841; son of Deacon John F., II. m. Anna H. Freed on October 27, 1866; four children. Farmer. Ordained preacher at Rockhill in the spring of 1876 and bishop on October 29, 1896. He was a tall man, well-proportioned; of a pleasing personality; conservative. d. October 3, 1917.

EHST, ABRAHAM G., 1869- D
b. September 19, 1869 at his present residence. Son of preacher John M. m. first, Catherine B. Landis on October 1, 1892; second, Mary F. Schaffer, nee Musselman, on November 13, 1915; two children to his first wife. Farmer. Ordained May 29, 1919 at Hereford. Reads the Scripture lesson in German in the Sunday morning service.

EHST, JOHN M., 1844-1923. M
b. May 14, 1844. m. Susanna S., daughter of Deacon John L. Gehman, on October 29, 1867; five children. Farmer on the Ehst homestead in Douglass twp., Berks co. Ordained at Hereford on June 3, 1886. Kept a diary, 1873-1910. d. May 4, 1923.

ESCHBACH, REUBEN S., 1839-1901. D
b. August 20, 1839. m. Mary H., a half sister of Preacher David L. Gehman; eight children. Shoemaker. Ordained at Hereford in 1880. d. February 6, 1901.

FREED, AARON N., 1865- M
b. in Franconia twp., Montgomery co., on October 14, 1865. m. Barbara H. Koch on December 24, 1887; two children. Harness maker, now a poultryman. Ordained at Lexington on May 29, 1901.

FREED, ENOS H., 1862- D
b. in Franconia twp. on June 23, 1862. m. Sallie Z. Frederick on November 10, 1883; ten children. Bricklayer and farmer. Ordained at Towamencin on February 2, 1926.

FREED, HARVEY C., 1879- D
b. at his present residence on April 16, 1879. m. Sallie K., daughter of Deacon, later Preacher, Henry M. Clemmer, on March 23, 1901; six children. Farmer. Ordained at Souderton October 23, 1924.

FREED, JACOB (FRIED), 1768-1847. D
b. July 7, 1768 in Franconia twp. m. Anna Fry on March 31, 1789. Ordained at Franconia May 8, 1810 (?). (A Jacob Fried signed the Alms audits in 1808 and 1809.) Was treasurer of the Franconia alms fund, 1811-1841. d. in 1847.

FREED, JACOB A., 1851-1929. D
b. July 5, 1851. m. Lydia Lewis on January 4, 1873; seven children. Farmer and lumber merchant. Ordained at Franconia on October 30, 1884. Served as alms treasurer, 1913-1924. d. January 28, 1929.

FRETZ, ABRAHAM, 1769-1844. D

b. in Bedminster twp., Bucks co., on March 30, 1769. m. Magdalena Kratz on April 30, 1793; ten children. Farmed on the Fretz homestead in Bedminster twp. Ordained deacon at Deep Run. Was a very conscientious man. One time asked a very high price for a cow which a stranger wanted to buy. To his surprise the stranger paid it. Fretz rode after him and returned part of the money. d. March 7, 1844.

FRETZ, ABRAHAM, 1793-1875. M

b. May 19, 1793. m. Susanna, daughter of Preacher John Bergey of Franconia; four children. Farmer and weaver in Bridgetown (also called Benjamin, now South Perkasio). Elected Commissioner of Bucks county in 1837 and County Treasurer in 1841. Was excluded from the lot when Jacob Detweiler was ordained in 1840 because of his political activities. And when he was ordained to help Detweiler in 1843 he continued to wear nonclerical garb for two years. The church was patient and he became a useful preacher. d. April 23, 1875.

FRETZ, DAVID L., 1836-1925. D

b. October 7, 1836. m. Mary Overholt December 10, 1859; three children. Farmer. Ordained at Blooming Glen on June 5, 1876. Lost his sympathy for the church when his brother and the Blooming Glen trustees became involved in litigation. In 1894 conference deposed him from his office and expelled him from the church. He seems to have sued Bishop Samuel Gross. He then united with the General Conference Mennonites as a layman. d. September 12, 1925.

FRETZ, MARK (MARKS), 1750-1840. D

b. in Bedminster twp., Bucks co., in December, 1750. m. Elizabeth, daughter of Deacon Henry Rosenberger of Franconia, on May 11, 1773; seven children. Served the Lexington congregation. Signed the Franconia audits in 1784 and 1785. d. February 24, 1840.

FUNK, CHRISTIAN (sometimes CRISTEL), 1731-1811. B

b. in Franconia twp., now Montgomery co., in 1731; son of Bishop Henry. m. Barbara, daughter of Preacher Julius Cassel, in 1751; nine children. In 1756 he was ordained preacher in the Franconia circuit. (This is the date given in the 1773 letter. As an aged man he wrote his *Spiegel* in which he says "about 1757.") In 1769 he was ordained bishop. Excommunicated in 1778 for his sympathies with the Colonies, advocating the payment of war taxes to the colonial government and refusing to take a stand against the declaration of allegiance to the same. Organized a small sect of his own which dwindled away after his death and became extinct about 1850. He died May 31, 1811 and was buried at Delp's burial ground — now locally known as the *Herrehaus* (the meetinghouse of the followers of John Herr). (See Part V, Chapters I and II.)

FUNK, HENRY (HENRICH FUNCK), d. 1760. B

Emigrated from Europe to America by 1719 and settled along the Indian Creek in what is now Franconia twp., Montgomery co. His wife was Anne, daughter of Immigrant Christian Meyer; ten children. He

was an early preacher at Salford and Franconia. S. W. Pennypacker says Funk was "long a bishop." Farmer and miller. Author of two books, *Ein Spiegel der Tauffe* (*A Mirror of Baptism*), 1744; and *Eine Restitution, Oder eine Erklaerung einiger Haupt-puncten des Gesetzes* . . . , (an exposition of the chief points of the Law and their fulfillment in Christ), published in 1763 by his children. (See Part IV, Chapter II.) J. D. Souder has a copy of this edition which was originally owned by Bishop (?) Valentine Clemmer. On a flyleaf is inscribed in German script, "This book belongs to me, Valentin Clemmer, and he who steals it, he is a thief." Funk was active in securing the translation of the *Martyrs' Mirror* into German and its publication at Ephrata in 1748-49. He and Dielman Kolb (d. 1756) were appointed to examine the translation as to its accuracy (see pp. 320 ff). Funk died in 1760. His grave is lost.

FUNK, HENRY, 1730- (?). M

b. in 1730. Son of Bishop Henry and brother of Bishop Christian. m. Barbara Showalter; thirteen children. Farmer and miller in Northampton co. Ordained in the Swamp district in 1768. Took the same position as his noted brother during the Revolutionary War and was excommunicated. Moved to Virginia in 1786.

FUNK, HENRY S., 1787-1826. M

b. March 25, 1787. Son of Preacher Jacob. m. Mary High (Hoch) of Hereford; six children, one of whom, Philip, refused to become a nominee for minister in 1827. John Z. Gehman was ordained. Farmer. Served the Hereford and Boyertown congregations. d. October 12, 1826.

FUNK, JACOB, 1730-1816. M

b. May (third month) 13, 1730. Ordained to the ministry in the Franconia circuit in 1765 (?). Signed the first alms audit in 1767. On May 7, 1774 he sold his Franconia farm, and moved to a farm he had purchased in Cheltenham twp., now Montgomery co., and he and his wife united with the Germantown congregation. He must have retired from active preaching by 1796 for in that year a list of Franconia Conference ministers who were to supply the Germantown pulpit monthly was drawn up. He died May 14, 1816.

FUNK, JACOB, 1761-1817. M

Son of Preacher Henry who moved to Virginia. b. May 30, 1761. His first wife was Mary Shelly; nine children. Farmed in Vincent twp., Chester co. Served at Vincent and Coventry. A Jacob Funk was present at the 1806 session of the Franconia Conference. He suffered a paralytic stroke just after reading (likely "lining") a hymn at a funeral in Montgomery county. d. July 22, 1817.

FUNK, JACOB H., 1825-1894. M

b. November 23, 1825. m. Anna Kolb on December 16, 1852; nine children. Preached at Vincent and Coventry for about thirty years. d. of gangrene on January 18, 1894.

FUNK, JOHN, 1754-1837. D

b. June 27, 1754. m. first, Catharine Knorr; second, Margaret Fitzgerald. Father of five children. Served in the Germantown congregation. d. May 27, 1837.

FUNK, JOHN. M

One of the early preachers at Lexington. He served around the year 1800.

GABEL, JOHN L., 1837-1887. D

b. May 12, 1837. m. first, Leah High; eight children. m. second, Elizabeth, sister of A. S. Mack; four children. Sawmiller and merchant. Ordained at Hereford on October 17, 1872. d. May 2, 1887.

GAHMAN, DANIEL G., 1878- . D

b. in Bedminster twp., Bucks co., November 17, 1878. m. Maggie O., sister of Bishop A. O. Histan, on January 18, 1902; one son. Farmer. Ordained at Deep Run October 20, 1927.

GANDER, JOSEPH, 1817-1901. D

b. in Baden, Germany, on April 11, 1817. The date of his coming to America is not known. m. Catharine B. Cassel; four children. Farmed near Royersford. Ordained at Providence in 1876. Signed the Skip-pack alms audits 1876-1900. As an old man he fell near a stove and burned his foot; the burn led to his death. d. December 17, 1901.

GEHMAN, ABRAHAM, d. 1792. M

Son of immigrant Christian Gehman who landed at Philadelphia on the ship *Samuel* on August 11, 1732. Christian lived in Berks county but as an aged man lived with his son, Preacher Abraham, and is buried at Rockhill. Abraham m. Elizabeth, daughter of Preacher Samuel Bechtel. Four children are mentioned in his will. Began signing the Franconia audits in 1770. Was a trustee of the Rockhill Church in 1773. Lived on the farm later occupied by Preacher Abel Horning (Clarence Magee now lives there). In his will he gave ten pounds to the poor of the meeting where he belonged and stood as a servant (minister). d. in 1792 and was buried at Rockhill.

GEHMAN, ABRAHAM S., 1849-1905. D

b. September 8, 1849. m. Anna Good on January 8, 1874; seven children. Farmer and school teacher. Ordained at Hereford October 31, 1901. Grandson of Preacher John Z., and grandfather of Ernest G. Gehman of Eastern Mennonite School. d. December 22, 1905.

GEHMAN, DAVID L., 1852-1932. M

b. June 5, 1852 at Sassamansville, Montgomery co. m. first, Catherine K. Proctor on November 7, 1874; second, Hannah Lapp, nee Moyer, on November 30, 1878; third, Mary Ann K. Smith on September 10, 1904. He had two children by his first marriage and one by his second. Farmer until 1904, then a saddler. Ordained at Doylestown November 14, 1895. He was the last German preacher at Doylestown. Died suddenly on April 24, 1932 while visiting at the home of E. J. Blough.

GEHMAN, ENOS S., 1855-1918. D

Grandson of Preacher John Z. and brother of Abraham S. b. September 1, 1855. m. Sarah H. Hiestand on September 23, 1880; ten children. School teacher; later a jeweler in Bally, Pa. Then a hosiery manufacturer. Ordained at Hereford on October 25, 1906. d. September 26, 1918.

GEHMAN, JACOB. M

Served the Springfield congregation about a century ago.

GEHMAN, JACOB R., 1839-1883. M

b. April 24, 1839. m. Maria —————; two children. Ordained at Lexington in 1881. Died on July 9, 1883 from injuries he received in falling from a cherry tree.

GEHMAN, JOHN ("HANNES"), 1741-1806. M

b. February 12, 1741. m. Anna Stauffer (?); three children are known. Farmer and wheelwright. Served at Upper Milford. He was evidently ordained after 1773. d. December 23, 1806. He was a brother to Preacher Abraham of Rockhill.

GEHMAN, JOHN, 1771-1848. M

Son of "Hannes." b. May 22, 1771. Father of six children. Ordained about 1813. Also served at Upper Milford. d. July 31, 1848.

GEHMAN, JOHN G., 1875- . M

Son of Deacon Abraham S. b. April 14, 1875 at Bally, Pa. Attended Pottstown high school one year. m. Mary B., daughter of Deacon Abraham B. Landis of Swamp, on August 28, 1897; one daughter (they adopted another). Electrician. Ordained October 21, 1919 at Swamp. Served as the only minister there for a decade.

GEHMAN, JOHN L., 1819-1892. D

b. September 12, 1819; son of Preacher John Z. m. first, Susanna Stauffer; one child. m. second, Elizabeth, sister of Susanna; five children, two of whom were deacons, Abraham S. and Enos S. Ordained at Hereford on June 5, 1858. d. March 3, 1892.

GEHMAN, JOHN Z., 1793-1882. M

b. June 28, 1793. m. Maria M. Latshaw; three children. Farmer. Ordained at Hereford in 1827, when one nominee refused to pass through the lot. Gehman always felt he had not been God's choice. Kept a diary from April 4, 1829 until May 31, 1882. On May 5, 1831 he wrote (translated from the German), "Rode to Franconia to Conference." Seldom preached after A. S. Mack was ordained. On May 21, 1871 he wrote in his diary, "Ministers gone, I read a sermon." (He used to read slowly from Jacob Denner's book of sermons.) d. July 3, 1882.

GEHMAN, SAMUEL, 1767-1845. M

Son of Preacher Abraham. b. May 9, 1767. m. Maria, daughter of Preacher George Derstine; eight children. Farmer. Also taught school in the original Rockhill meetinghouse. Ordained in 1798. Signed

Franconia alms audit in 1799. Lived on the present Landis Brothers' farm. A "D. D." is attached to his name in deeds! Was a close friend of the Reformed minister, John Andrew Strassburger; they jointly conducted many funeral services. d. September 24, 1845.

GEHMAN, TOBIAS R., 1846-1913. D

b. October 14, 1846. m. Maria M. Hedrick on January 7, 1871; five children. Ordained at Blooming Glen on November 10, 1896. Kept the first church record there. d. October 18, 1913.

GEIL, JOHN, 1778-1866. M

b. April 9, 1778. m. Elizabeth, daughter of Deacon Mark Fretz on April 22, 1802; nine children. Weaver, later a farmer. Ordained at Lexington about 1810. John F. Funk published a biographical sketch of Geil in 1897. He describes him as "tall, well-proportioned, rather slender, erect, long and rather narrow face, high forehead; in his later years wore his hair long, almost reaching his shoulders." Geil was very energetic, making trips to Northampton county to preach. He preached in schoolhouses in his community; and even preached in English on occasions. It is said that Oliver Morris of the State Legislature greatly admired him. d. January 16, 1866.

GEISINGER, ABRAHAM, 1789-1871. M

b. March 30, 1789. m. Barbara Meyer; six children. Ordained at Springfield in 1836 (?). His tombstone says he preached at Springfield 27 years. d. July 15, 1871. He may have also preached at Flatland.

GEISINGER, DANIEL. D

Ordained at Springfield prior to 1847. United with Oberholtzer's Conference in May, 1848.

GEISINGER, PHILIP. B

Ordained as both preacher and deacon between 1773 and 1785. Likely of the Swamp district. Christian Funk relates how he and Geisinger met on one occasion at Easton.

GODSHALK, ABRAHAM, 1791-1838. M

b. near Doylestown on December 29, 1791. m. Sarah Shrauger on October 17, 1815; seven children. Farmer. Ordained at Doylestown in 1824. Wrote a treatise on the new birth, *A Description of the New Creature*, probably to meet the proselyting activities of the emotional Evangelicals. His book was published both in German and English in 1838. He died on August 19 of that year.

GODSHALK, ISAAC, 1787-1852. B

b. in New Britain twp., Bucks co., in 1787. m. Hannah Anglemoyer (?). Bought his father's farm in 1812. Ordained to the ministry at Doylestown and later was ordained bishop. d. November 14, 1852.

GODSHALK, JACOB (GAEDTSCHALCK), c. 1670-1763. B

b. c. 1670 at Goch, Germany. Came to America in 1702 and settled at Germantown. On October 8 of the same year he was ordained to the

ministry. He says he read his sermons (from books), at least at first. In May, 1708, he performed the first baptisms and conducted the first communion service in the American Mennonite Church, but there is no record of his formal ordination as bishop. He bought 50 acres in 1702 and on it erected a house, now the site of 5273 Germantown Avenue. Naturalized in 1708. In 1713 his name headed a list of petitioners for the laying out of the Skippack pike. He secured a deed for his Skippack farm on February 12, 1714. Here he spent the remainder of his long and influential life. He was among those who wrote to the Holland Mennonites concerning the publication of a German *Martyrs' Mirror*. The Towamencin meetinghouse was erected on his farm. He was the father of five children. Farmer, also a turner. Wrote a very helpful sketch of the early Mennonite Church life at Germantown. He made his will on December 26, 1760. It was proved June 3, 1763. It is believed that he died in May, 1763. His grave is unknown. Perhaps he was buried in the Godshalk burial ground, now the cemetery of the Towamencin Mennonite Church. He signed the Skippack alms audits, 1745-1757. In 1753 and 1756 two Jacob Godshalks signed. The latter spelled his name, "Goetschalcks." The old bishop's name usually headed the list. Jacob Goetschalcks signed nearer the end of the list, signing eight times from 1753-1781. Was he also ordained?

GODSHALK, SAMUEL, 1817-1896. M

Son of Preacher Abraham of Doylestown. b. in Doylestown twp. on May 17, 1817. In early life he was a school teacher. He also taught singing schools — the rudiments of vocal music. In 1840 he married Elizabeth Meyer, and they bought a farm at Deep Run. Was a church chorister. About 1850 (some historians say 1849) he was ordained to the ministry there. By his first marriage he had nine children. On October 22, 1865 he married Susanna Yoder (or Young?). During his ministry he made many preaching tours; the largest of these was in 1869 when he made a trip through Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Canada, preaching in Mennonite communities. He visited the Virginia churches five times. Published an essay called, "Early Piety." d. October 20, 1896.

GODSHALL, HENRY, 1834-1908. M

b. April 5, 1834. m. Lovina Krupp; seven children. Farmer and carpenter. Ordained at Plain in 1874. Silenced in November, 1905, on various charges of unethical conduct. d. November 3, 1908.

GODSHALL, JACOB C., 1834-1898. D

b. August 13, 1834. m. Esther J. Bean on January 1, 1860; four children. Carpenter, later a farmer. Served Towamencin as a deacon. d. December 29, 1898.

GOOD, ISRAEL, 1847-1912. D

b. January 20, 1847. Ordained deacon at Vincent on October 30, 1905. d. June 24, 1912.

GOOD, WILLIAM, 1849-1905. D

b. September 25, 1849. m. Barbara Hiestand of Doylestown; eight children. Ordained for Vincent and Coventry in 1888. d. of tuberculosis on March 13, 1905.

GORGAS, JOHN (sometimes GORGAES). M

Attended the 1725 Conference and signed as a Germantown minister.

GOTTSHALL, JACOB, 1769-1845. B

b. December 25, 1769 in Franconia twp. m. Barbara Kindig; eleven children. School teacher. Ordained preacher at Franconia in 1804 and bishop in 1813. He was a great-grandson of Bishop Jacob Gaedtschalk (1670-1763). d. September 21, 1845.

GOTTSHALL, WILLIAM Z., 1784-1875. D

b. August 25, 1784. m. Magdalena Hunsberger. Ordained in 1818, probably for the Schwenksville congregation. He signed the Skippack alms audits, 1818-1847. Went with Oberholtzer in 1847. Was the father of the noted Bishop Moses H. Gottshall of the General Conference Mennonites. d. March 25, 1875.

GOTWALS, JOHN, c. 1788-1877. D

b. c. 1788. m. Elizabeth ————. Ordained deacon at Providence c. 1833 for in that year he began signing the Skippack alms audits. d. on August 19, 1877.

GOTWALS, JOHN G., 1840-1929.

b. June 27, 1840. m. Lydia H. Detweiler on January 18, 1866; eleven children. Farmer. Ordained at Providence on October 30, 1900. Excommunicated in May, 1912. Was received into the church later as a layman. d. April 9, 1929.

GREDER, JACOB. M

Emigrated from the Palatinate to America in 1733 on the ship *Samuel* which arrived at Philadelphia on August 17. Father of eleven children two of whom were b. in the Palatinate. Weaver and farmer; lived near the present village of Graterford. Signed the first audit in the Skip-pack alms book and continued to sign until 1759.

GROSS, ABRAM G., 1870- D

b. in Plumstead twp. Bucks co., on July 25, 1870. m. Sallie A. Lapp on February 23, 1893; eleven children. Farmer. Ordained at Doylestown on May 24, 1910.

GROSS, CHRISTIAN, 1776-1865. M

b. in Germantown December 24, 1776. m. Barbara Wismer on April 26, 1803. After marriage moved to Plumstead twp., Bucks co.; six children. By 1834 he was a preacher at Deep Run for in that year he preached a funeral sermon. Son of Bishop Jacob. d. July 22, 1865.

GROSS, DANIEL, 1795-1875. D

b. in June, 1795. m. Elizabeth Nash on June 20, 1809; four children. Farmer and weaver. Ordained at Doylestown c. 1845. Brother of Preacher Christian of Deep Run. d. March 15, 1875, aged 90 years, 5 months, and 21 days.

GROSS, JACOB, c. 1743-1810. B

b. c. 1743 in Germany. Emigrated to America c. 1763. Settled first at Skippack, then resided at Germantown, and finally settled in Bedminster twp., Bucks co. m. Mary Krall; six children (including Preacher Christian, Preacher Jacob of Ontario, Preacher John K, and Deacon Daniel). Ordained at Deep Run between 1773 and 1796. He preached at Germantown on November 6, 1796. Bishop by 1804. Shoemaker and farmer. d. December 12, 1810.

GROSS, JOHN, 1814-1903. M

Son of Preacher Christian. b. December 3, 1814. m. Catharine Wismer; two children. Ordained in 1852 at Deep Run. Opposed Sunday schools and English. He wept when English hymns were sung at Deep Run. One of the last men who preserved the old-fashioned art of illuminated lettering. d. June 16, 1903.

GROSS, JOHN K., 1786-1864. M

b. December 2, 1786. m. 1) Maria Leatherman; five children. m. 2) Christianna Meyers, nee Godshalk; three children. Weaver and farmer at Fountainville. Ordained at Doylestown c. 1833. Son of Bishop Jacob and father of Deacon John L. and Preacher Samuel. d. January 5, 1864.

GROSS, JOHN L., 1824-1901. D

b. August 25, 1824. m. Esther Gotwals on January 30, 1851; four children. Merchant, later a farmer. Ordained at Doylestown c. 1861. d. December 5, 1901.

GROSS, JOSEPH, 1866-1921. M

b. June 28, 1866. In 1890 he m. Maria Moyer in Canada; three children. Plumber and iron-fence manufacturer. Ordained at Blooming Glen on November 26, 1918. d. May 15, 1921.

GROSS, JOSEPH L., 1904- M

b. June 12, 1904, son of Deacon Abram G. m. Bertha Mae Alderfer on October 4, 1930; one child. Butcher. Ordained at Doylestown on December 31, 1935.

GROSS, MAHLON, 1873- M

b. on September 1, 1873 in Plumstead twp., Bucks co. Joined the Doylestown Methodist Episcopal Church in 1894 and was given an Exhorter's License the same year. m. Annie C. Roe on June 6, 1895 and moved to Landisville, N. J., where he was ordained a local preacher. In 1900 returned to Bucks co. On March 25, 1913 he united with the Doylestown Mennonite Church as a layman. Didn't participate in the communion service for several years until grapejuice had displaced wine. Was ordained at Doylestown Mennonite Church on May 25, 1920. From 1891-1900 he taught school. Attended the spring terms at Millersville (Pa.) Normal School in 1892 and 1894. After 1900 he farmed. Now living at Eastern Mennonite Home, Souderton.

GROSS, SAMUEL G., 1839-1895. B

b. on March 2, 1839. m. Lydia H. Meyers on October 10, 1863; eight children. Farmer. Ordained preacher at Doylestown on November 13, 1866 and bishop at Blooming Glen on November 1, 1883. Occasionally preached in English. Preached a sermon at Harvest-Home services on August 13, 1895 and died the next day.

GROSS, WILLIAM S., 1866-1903. M

b. October 10, 1866. m. Elizabeth W. Myers (now "Libbie" Bishop of Blooming Glen) on January 28, 1893; two children. Farmer. Ordained at Deep Run on December 12, 1901. About December 1, 1902 a horse injured one of his toes by stepping on it. In February, 1903 he and his wife bought a farm. That month he was taken seriously ill with pneumonia. On March 5 he became very sick. The physician said Gross had tetanus (from the injury of his toe). d. March 6, 1903. He was a grandson of Samuel Godshalk and John Gross and was a brother of Mahlon.

HACKMAN, HENRY, 1817-1884. D

b. October 17, 1817. m. Anna Freed. Ordained at Franconia in 1861. d. February 28, 1884.

HALDEMAN, ————. D

One of the early deacons at Doylestown.

HALDEMAN, ABRAHAM, 1780-1865. B

Son of Preacher Christian. b. August 30, 1780. m. 1) Anna, daughter of Pre. John Bergey of Salford. m. 2) Elizabeth, daughter of Preacher Jacob Funk of Vincent; four children. Lived on the farm now owned by Preacher Amos Kolb. Ordained in 1830 for Vincent and Coventry and served twelve years in Chester county during which time he was ordained bishop. Moved to Juniata co., one report states, because he was silenced for giving communion to lodge members, but Preacher Henry S. Bower stated that Haldeman moved away only because of factional trouble in his congregation. In any case, he again served the church in Juniata county, Pennsylvania. d. March 30, 1865.

HALDEMAN, CHRISTIAN, 1744-1833. M

b. in May, 1744. m. Magdalena Freed; nine children. Farmer in Lower Salford twp. Ordained preacher at Salford, probably by 1791 for in that year he signed the Franconia alms audit. Preached at Germantown on September 10, 1797. Was apparently an influential man. d. July 6, 1833.

HALDEMAN, JACOB. M

Served the Phoenixville Mennonite Church, probably in the early nineteenth century.

HALDEMAN, JOHN M., 1824-1881. M

b. October 30, 1824. m. Anna Clymer on September 3, 1846; five children. Farmer. Ordained at Lexington in 1869. Progressive and evangelistic, he co-operated with ministers of other denominations such as

the Evangelicals. Preached for the Mennonites at Germantown every two weeks from 1876-1878. By 1876 Haldeman had been made ministerially inactive for insubordination. In the May, 1876 conference of the General Conference Mennonites Haldeman was received as a minister. But after several years he returned to his Lexington congregation as a layman. d. September 29, 1881.

HALDEMAN, JOSEPH. M

A Phoenixville minister, probably in the early nineteenth century.

HELLERMAN, GEORGE, 1795-1867. M

b. January 2, 1795. m. Hester Allman; three children. Ordained about 1836 at Germantown. He then resided seven years at Germantown; fourteen years in Whitpain twp., Montgomery co., then moved to Chester co., and finally lived with his daughter in Upper Providence twp., Montgomery co. According to tradition he and John Minnich had unpleasant relations. Hellerman preached in English while Minnich bitterly opposed English. One almost feels inclined to doubt the conference affiliation of Hellerman. But D. K. Cassel states that he was a member of the Franconia Conference. d. February 12, 1867; was buried at Providence; and his obituary was published in the May, 1867, *Herald of Truth*.

HENDRICKS, ABRAHAM. D

A deacon in the Skippack circuit. Signed the alms audits, 1822-1834 and occasionally served as one of the treasurers.

HIGH, JOHN (JOHANNES HOCH), 1742-1815. M

b. December 31, 1742. m. Magdalena _____. Is one of the ministers who preached at Germantown in 1797. d. October 15, 1815. Buried at Coventry.

HIGH, PHILIP (HOCH), 1755-1828. D

b. March 9, 1755. m. Anna, daughter of Preacher John Bechtel (d. 1795). Served as deacon at Hereford. d. September 4, 1828.

HISTAND, ABRAHAM O., 1869- . B

b. in Doylestown twp., Bucks co., on February 10, 1869. m. Emma B. Wismer on October 3, 1891; twelve children. He is a grandson of Preacher Jacob. After marriage he worked for his brother-in-law, Abram Wismer, until 1894, then moved to his present residence. Farmer. Ordained on November 11, 1896 at Doylestown by Bishop A. S. Mack. Ordained bishop at Blooming Glen on April 11, 1922. His churches are growing.

HISTAND, JACOB, 1791-1877. M

b. December 22, 1791, near Spring City, Pa. m. Barbara Swartz of Mount Bethel, Northampton co.; eleven children. Farmer and miller. Ordained in the Swamp district in 1832. About ten years later moved to a farm about a mile west of the town of Doylestown. He then preached at the Doylestown Church. Was a very vigorous man; helped dress millstones the day before his death. d. March 27, 1877.

HIESTAND, JOHN, 1785-1880. D

b. February 6, 1785. Both his first and second wives seem to have been named Catharine Cassel. Served Vincent and Coventry a number of years. d. March 22, 1880.

HOLZHAUSSEN, MICHAEL. M

The first known minister at the Upper Milford Church near Zionsville.

HORNING, ABEL, 1825-1906. M

b. November 10, 1825. m. 1) Mary Moyer on January 21, 1849; four children. m. 2) Mary, daughter of preacher Jacob Detweiler, and widow of John Landis, on October 2, 1893. School teacher, later a farmer. Ordained at Rockhill on November 5, 1863. Sometimes preached in English by request. He was, "tall, erect, well-proportioned, kindly-natured, fluent in speech." His sermons were usually an hour in length. d. March 25, 1906.

HUNSBERGER, CHRISTIAN R., 1823-1906. M

b. May 3, 1823. m. Veronica (or Fannie) D. Van Fossen on November 22, 1846; thirteen children. Farmer at Creamery, Pa. Ordained at Skippack in 1879. d. May 8, 1906.

HUNSBERGER, HENRY (HEINRICH), 1768-1854. B

b. January 24, 1768. m. Catharine ————. Ordained preacher at Blooming Glen in 1807 and bishop some time later. He was second senior bishop in 1847 and presided at the October, 1847, conference when the senior bishop, John Hunsicker, John H. Oberholtzer, and others walked out of the meetinghouse during the session. d. March 23, 1854.

HUNSBERGER, JACOB, 1788-1878. D

b. June 8, 1788. m. Maria Meyer on April 29, 1819; five children. Farmer. Served at Blooming Glen. Didn't read the Scripture lessons in the church services. d. March 29, 1878.

HUNSBERGER, JACOB B., 1836-1919. M

b. April 15, 1836. Ordained for Coventry and Vincent on November 24, 1877. d. January 28, 1919.

HUNSBERGER, J. MARTIN, 1863-1933. D

b. October 3, 1863. m. Emma Jane Jones on January 1, 1887; nine children. Farmer. Ordained at Providence on June 27, 1912. d. September 3, 1933.

HUNSBERRY, JOHN B., 1821-1898. B

b. July 29, 1821. m. Catharine Hunsberger; five children. Ordained preacher in the Skippack circuit in 1863, and bishop in 1877. d. January 20, 1898.

HUNSICKER, ABRAHAM, 1793-1872. M

b. July 31, 1793. Son of Bishop Henry. m. Elizabeth Alderfer on May 30, 1816; ten children. Ordained preacher at Skippack on January 1, 1847. Went with Oberholtzer the following October. Was then or-

dained bishop to succeed his brother John. In 1848 he and his son, Henry A., established Freeland Seminary. Henry A. Hunsicker served as principal of Freeland Seminary from 1848-1865. (In 1869 the institution was chartered as Ursinus College.) Among those who studied at Freeland was John F. Funk, pioneer Mennonite publisher; Bishop Warren Bean also attended Ursinus College. In 1851 Abraham Hunsicker, his son, Henry A., whom the Oberholtzer Mennonites had ordained preacher on January 1, 1850, and others, were expelled from Oberholtzer's Conference and for a number of years carried on a sort of nonsectarian church work. Abraham was tall, well-built, weighed over two hundred pounds, had a massive forehead, and a dark but ruddy complexion. d. January 12, 1872.

HUNSICKER, HENRY (HEINRICH), 1752-1836. B

Son of Deacon Valentine. b. March 7, 1752 at Skippack. m. Esther Detweiler on December 6, 1772; ten children. Began signing the Skippack alms audits in 1781. But it is usually claimed that he was ordained preacher at the age of 30 (1782). Preached 54 years at Skippack. Was ordained bishop soon after he was a preacher. Spoke and wrote well both in German and English. Traveled on horseback. John F. Funk wrote, "He is said to have been both an able and eloquent speaker, of quick perception, mild but firm in his discipline, and held in high esteem, both as a man and as a preacher." (*The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers*, p. 89). d. July 8, 1836.

HUNSICKER, ISAAC, 1738-1828. D

b. September 28, 1738. m. Barbara Greder on November 15, 1767; eleven children. Began signing the Skippack alms audits in 1764; was the treasurer, 1785-1821. d. February 23, 1828.

HUNSICKER, JACOB, 1770-1856. M

b. in 1770. m. Barbara Moyer (?); ten children (?). Served Blooming Glen as a preacher. d. February 24, 1856.

HUNSICKER, JOHN, 1773-1847. B

b. at Skippack on August 27, 1773. Son of Bishop Henry. m. first, Elizabeth Detweiler; six children. m. second, Catherine High. Preached in the Skippack circuit almost 40 years. Was bishop of the Skippack, Worcester, Providence, and Gottshalls' (Schwenksville) congregations. "Contributing member of the Trappe Literary Society," and read many of its books. Senior bishop of the Franconia Conference at the time of the Oberholtzer schism. Withdrew from the Franconia Conference in October, 1847. d. November 17, 1847.

HUNSICKER, VALENTINE, 1700-1771. D

b. in the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland, in 1700. Emigrated to America in 1717 with his maternal grandfather, Bishop Valentine Clemmer. Settled at Skippack. m. first, _____; two children. m. second, Elizabeth, daughter of Deacon (?) Jacob Kolb; seven children. Weaver and farmer; bought 125 acres at five shillings per acre; later bought an additional hundred acres. Began signing the

Skippack audits in 1739. Was treasurer, 1742-52 and 1761-1770. d. March 30, 1771.

JOHNSON, CONRAD (JANSEN). D

Probably came from Holland. Was in Germantown by 1707. Ordained there on March 22, 1708. Weaver. m. Keukon _____. d. by 1717.

JOHNSON, NICHOLAS (CLAUS JANSEN), 1658-1745. M

b. 1658. m. Catherine Conrad; thirteen children. Came to America and settled at Germantown in 1686. In 1702 he moved to Skippack. Owned a 306-acre farm in what is now Worcester twp. He was tax collector of Bebbert's twp., 1718-1725. Was one of the earliest preachers at Skippack. Signed the very first audit in the alms book (1738). d. 1745. Extract from his will, "I also give bequeath ye Book called the Book of Martyrs to my Sd Wife."

KARSDORP, HARMEN (or HERMAN CASDORP). M

Left Altona (Germany) on March 5, 1700 and came to America with his wife, Adriana van Vossen and children. Ordained at Germantown on April 20, 1708. Evidently d. before 1725.

KAUFFMAN, SAMUEL. D

A deacon in the Upper Milford church who went with Oberholtzer in the division of 1847.

KEPHART, JOHN, 1751-1822. M

b. in northern Switzerland on February 13, 1751. Came to America with his father Henry, his mother, sister Rachel and brother Jacob in 1754 on the ship *Edinburgh* which arrived at Philadelphia on September 30. On October 23, 1778 John enlisted in the Continental army. While his regiment was campaigning in Bucks co. in 1779 he met and married Elizabeth Fretz of Deep Run. After the war he settled in what is now Gwynedd twp., Montgomery co. In 1802 he bought a 102-acre farm three or four miles west of Doylestown. He and his wife at once united with the Doylestown Mennonite Church. In 1806 he was ordained the first resident preacher of the Doylestown congregation. He is described as "of medium height and weight, dark-eyed, robust and handsome in appearance, vigorous but calm and poised, sincere and alert in manner." Nine children. d. August 31, 1822. See his biography by Calvin Ira Kephart LL.M., D.C.L., Ph.D., in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, April, 1928.

KNORR, JACOB.

Christian Funk (1731-1811) says that immediately after he was deposed from the ministry (1778) he went to (Bishop) Martin Bechtel and to Jacob Knorr, and told his sad tale, but they didn't take up his case. Evidently Knorr was an official in the Mennonite Church, likely a Chester co. bishop, but nothing is known of him. There is a Knauertown in Warwick twp., Chester co., about 7 or 8 miles from the Coventry meetinghouse.

(?) KOLB, ABRAHAM.

N. B. Grubb considers the Abraham Kolb of the 1796 letter (from Franconia to Germantown) to have been a deacon in the Germantown Church. Perhaps he was. (See the Documentary Appendix).

KOLB, AMOS, 1879- M

b. October 24, 1879 at his present residence. m. Lizzie Good on January 3, 1902; seven sons. Farmer. Ordained at Vincent on June 7, 1906. Field worker of the Franconia Mission Board.

KOLB, CHARLES, 1884- D

b. January 9, 1884 at Spring City, Pa. m. Anna H. Weaver of Waynesboro, Va., on February 14, 1905; four children. Farmer. Ordained at Vincent on May 26, 1910.

KOLB, DILLMAN (DIELMAN, sometimes TIELMAN), 1691-1756. M

b. November 10, 1691 at Wolfsheim in the Palatinate. m. Elizabeth Schnebli (Snively) on Saint Jacob's Day (July 25 ?), 1714; one daughter. Weaver and farmer. Left Ibersheim in the Palatinate on March 21, 1717 and reached Philadelphia on August 10. He may have been ordained in Europe as many historians assert. But if so, why did he not attend the 1725 conference in America? In 1721 Kolb purchased 225 acres of land in what was later Lower Salford twp., Montgomery co. In 1738 he was one of the four trustees of the first Salford Church property. He was an influential preacher and leader. He and Bishop Henry Funk examined the 1748-49 German *Martyrs' Mirror* for accuracy of translation from the Dutch (see pp. 320ff). Kolb bequeathed "Two Pounds ten Shillings Lawfull money of Pennsylv^a to be Disposed of to such Pious uses as y^e Dutch Mennonist in Salford afores^d shall think fit and in like manner Two Pounds ten shillings to be at y^e Disposal of y^e Congregation of the s^d Mennonists in y^e Township of Perk-yomin & Skepack." (*Strassburger Family*, p. 412). d. December 28, 1756. See his biography by John D. Souder in the January, 1929, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. See also the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

KOLB, DILLMAN (DIELMAN), 1719-1799. M

The 1773 letter says he was ordained in 1752 in the Skippack circuit. Evidently the following man: b. March 2, 1719. m. Wilhemina Rittenhouse, granddaughter of Preacher William. Signed the Skippack alms audits, 1761-1779. d. October 19, 1799.

KOLB, HENRY, d. 1730. M

Brother of Preachers Martin and Dielman and Deacon Jacob. Emigrated to America in 1707. Seven children. First settled at Germantown. Settled at Skippack in 1709 and was one of the seven trustees there in 1717. Attended the 1725 conference and subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. d. 1730.

KOLB, HENRY (HENRICH), 1721-1783. M

The 1773 letter says he was ordained at Skippack in 1752. Probably the Henry Kolb who was born in 1721. m. Elizabeth, daughter of Julius (Yilles) Cassel on May 10, 1744; eleven children. Operated a dyeing and fulling mill on the Ridge Valley Creek near the present Sunneytown. Signed alms audits, 1753-1781. d. 1783.

KOLB, HENRY C., 1812-1894. D

b. September 8, 1812. m. Elizabeth Landis; four children. Ordained at Salford, November 30, 1865, the same date as Henry S. Bower's ordination. Burned to death on December 6, 1894 evidently in an attempt to extinguish a spreading brush fire.

KOLB, ISAAC, 1711-1776. B

b. March 28, 1711, son of Deacon (?) Jacob (d. 1739). m. 1) Geertrauta Ziegler; 2) Margaret, widow of Cornelius Conrad. Farmer. Was an extremely strong man physically. Lived on the present Landis Brothers' farm, which he purchased in 1737, until 1764. His will indicates that he spent the latter years of his life in Gwynedd twp., south of Lansdale. His will indicates that he had eleven children. Ordained preacher in the Franconia circuit (for Rockhill?) in 1744 and bishop in 1761. d. 1776.

KOLB, JACOB, 1685-1739. D (?)

b. May 21, 1685. Emigrated from the Palatinate to Germantown in 1707. Moved to Skippack in 1709. On May 2, 1710 m. Sarah van Sintern; nine children, one of whom was Bishop Isaac; another married Deacon Valentine Hunsicker. Weaver and farmer. The Skippack alms book indicates that he was the treasurer in 1738. He was probably a deacon. Killed when a beam fell on him while pressing cider on October 4, 1739.

KOLB, JACOB, 1806-1893. D

b. in 1806. Served in the Springfield congregation. d. April 27, 1893.

KOLB, JACOB, 1745- (?). D

b. March 2, 1745. m. Annie Yoder on June 29, 1768; eight children, one of whom m. Deacon John Lederach. Signed the Franconia alms audits 1801-1813. Christian Funk mentions Kolb (*Spiegel*, p. 50). He was of the Salford congregation. d. _____.

KOLB, JACOB, 1799-1867. M

b. November 2, 1799. m. Nancy, daughter of Preacher Isaac Alderfer; eleven children. Farmer. Served at Salford. It is claimed that he couldn't preach. He was a grandson of Deacon Jacob (b. 1745), and a first cousin of Deacon Henry C. d. April 18, 1867.

KOLB, J. CLAYTON, 1874- . M

b. September 12, 1874. m. Emma B. Longacre on November 9, 1897; four children. Farmer. Ordained at Vincent on June 4, 1900. Suspended from the ministry in 1904 for opposing Sunday-school work. In 1910

was reinstated but in short time he left the church, moved to Lancaster co., and united with the Martinites. He is at present a layman in the Mennonite Church.

KOLB, JONATHAN, 1825-1897. D

b. November 25, 1825. m. Elizabeth Funk in February, 1850; three children. Taught school in the building connected with the old Rhoades' (Vincent) meetinghouse. Farmer. Ordained at Vincent on November 16, 1875. Kept minutes of the proceedings of the Franconia Conference, 1892-1896. d. June 1, 1897.

KOLB, MARTIN, 1680-1761. M

b. in the Palatinate in 1680. Emigrated to America in 1707. m. Magdalena, daughter of Deacon Isaac van Sintern on May 19, 1709; seven children. Weaver and farmer. Ordained at Germantown on April 20, 1708. Moved to Skippack in 1709. Was one of the church trustees in 1717. Signed the first audit (1738) in the Skippack alms book. In 1749 he preached the funeral sermon of the noted Reformed minister, John Philip Boehm. d. 1761.

KRATZ, JOHN 1782-1872. D

b. June 27, 1782. m. Catherine Johnson on April 16, 1807; two daughters. Wealthy farmer. Ordained at Skippack by 1825, for in that year he began to sign the audits. Attended the Franconia Conference for the last time in 1866. d. December 23, 1872.

KRIEBEL, JOHN S., 1882- M

b. at his present residence on October 27, 1882. Attended the fall and winter terms of Perkiomen Seminary (Pennsburg, Pa.) in 1902-1903. m. Mary G. Gehman on December 14, 1911; one child. Farmer. Ordained at Hereford on October 25, 1917.

KROUT, PHILIP R., 1808-1880. M

b. August 13, 1808. m. Catharine ———. Ordained at Lexington after the division of 1847. d. November 8, 1880.

KRUPP, HENRY C. (KROPP in family-Bible), 1848-1929. D

b. in Towamencin twp., Montgomery co., on April 17, 1848. m. 1) Elizabeth, daughter of Preacher Henry Nice, on December 11, 1869; one son. m. 2) Lydia F. Hunsberger on March 21, 1901. Farmer. First man ordained at Souderton. Ordained on November 5, 1891. Very active in Sunday-school work. d. June 19, 1929.

KRUPP, JOHN (KROPP on tombstone), 1779-1842. M

b. in 1779. m. 1) Hannah Markley; nine children. m. 2) Esther ———. Farmed near Krupp's school in Towamencin twp. Ordained at Plain c. 1816. James Y. Heckler called him "The eminent Mennonite minister." Brother to Abraham Krupp who wrote *The New and Much Improved Musical Teacher* and *A Choice Selection of Hymns*. Abraham also tried to invent a "flying-machine" but his experiment was unsuccessful. Preacher John d. May 24, 1842.

- KULP, ABRAHAM, 1771-1848. M
 b. April 19, 1771 in Tinicum twp., Bucks co. m. Sarah Hunsicker in 1796. In 1805 they moved to Bedminster twp., where he was soon ordained at the Deep Run Church. Ten children. Farmer. d. February 23, 1848.
- KULP, ABRAHAM H., 1841-1901. D
 b. January 31, 1841. m. Eliza Cassel; eleven children. Ordained at Plain in 1883. Farmer. Son of Bishop Jacob. d. September 27, 1901.
- KULP, ABRAHAM S., 1821-1904. D
 b. in 1821. m. Sarah Keyser; two children. Farmer. Ordained at Skip-pack in 1874. d. August 6, 1904.
- KULP, ELIAS W., 1880- . M
 b. in Lower Salford twp., on July 3, 1880. Attended one term at Perkiomen Seminary in 1898. m. Elizabeth, sister of Preacher J. C. Clemens, on June 1, 1901; fifteen children. Post-office clerk, 1901-1905; farmer, 1905-1925; mail carrier (star route), 1925- . Ordained at Hereford on May 17, 1923. Since 1927 has done evangelistic work in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Ontario, Maryland, Oregon, etc.
- KULP, IRWIN C., 1883- . D
 Son of Deacon Abraham H. of Plain. b. June 15, 1883. m. Susan L., daughter of Deacon Jacob A. Freed of Franconia; two children. Farmer. Ordained at Franconia on June 17, 1926. Has charge of the historic alms book.
- KULP, ISAAC C., 1867- . M
 b. in Towamencin twp., Montgomery co., on May 28, 1867. m. Lizzie S. Metz on February 9, 1889; five children. Farmer. Ordained at Towamencin on October 29, 1912.
- KULP, JACOB, 1798-1875. B
 b. October 5, 1798. m. Catharine Hunsicker on June 1, 1828; seven children. Farmed in Towamencin twp. Ordained preacher at Plain on August 2, 1838, and bishop, on December 21, 1843. He baptized John F. Funk. d. June 27, 1875.
- KULP, JACOB, 1769-1858. M
 b. April 30, 1769. m. Catherine Delp on March 24, 1793; eight children. Farmer. Ordained at Doylestown in June, 1818. It is traditional that Catherine didn't vote for a minister. When the bishop urged her, she replied that she hardly knew any one in the congregation except her husband, but she knew he could preach! Jacob was then considered a nominee and the lot fell on him. There are some strange elements in this tradition. One is the fact that in recent times a large number of people do not nominate any one. In 1831 he moved to Walnut Creek, Ohio, and there organized a church, now called after him, "Kulp's." A log meetinghouse was erected on the farm of his nephew, Jacob Kulp. Jacob d. in Holmes co., Ohio, in September, 1858.

LANDES, ABRAHAM. M

Ordained in the Deep Run circuit in 1758.

LANDES, ELIAS, 1796-1863. M

b. March 23, 1796. m. Mollie ———. Ordained at Skippack in 1831. He succeeded Henry Bean who was silenced, d. February 23, 1863.

LANDES, IRWIN R., 1860- M

b. December 31, 1860 in Skippack twp. m. Mary D. Tyson on December 20, 1884; seven children. Butcher, later a farmer. Ordained on November 9, 1909 at Skippack.

LANDES, JACOB P., 1808-1895. M

b. October 1, 1808 in Upper Salford twp., Montgomery co. m. Mary O. Clemens; eight children. Farmer. Ordained at Franconia in November, 1847. d. April 5, 1895.

LANDES, JACOB T., 1875- D

b. August 14, 1875 in Skippack twp. m. Maggie Smith on April 20, 1900. Farmer. Ordained at Skippack on June 15, 1926. Has the old Skippack alms book in his care.

LANDES, JACOB T., 1893- M

b. October 4, 1893 in Skippack twp. Single. Laborer. Ordained at Skippack on June 9, 1931.

LANDES, JOHN D., 1801-1860. D

b. in Skippack twp., on March 3, 1801. m. Elizabeth Grater in 1825; eight children. Farmer and miller. Was a deacon at Skippack. Began signing the alms book in 1837. d. April 14, 1860.

LANDES, RUDOLPH. D

The first known deacon at Deep Run. On April 12, 1784 Abraham and Rudolph Landes wrote a letter to one, Jacob Rupp, in Germany. On April 15, 1786 Jacob Rupp of "Heppenheim near Alzey" (in Hesse, Germany) wrote a letter to his "dear friends, Abraham and Rudolph Landes." On April 13, 1787 Rudolph wrote a letter to his "Beloved friend and Cousin, Jacob Rupp, in which he (Rudolph) recalled having been received into the Mennonite congregation at "Upper Florschheim" (evidently also in Hesse, Germany) "nearly 38 years ago." (See, "Two Interesting Letters" in Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History*, pp. 401-405.) It is quite probable that Abraham and Rudolph Landes were brothers. Abraham was ordained to the ministry in the Deep Run circuit in 1758. Rudolph's ordination date is not known. Rudolph was still living in 1801 when he joined in writing the letter to Ontario. (See Part II, Chapter XVIII, p. 190).

LANDIS, ABRAHAM B., 1834-1897. D

b. November 8, 1834. Ordained at Swamp in 1870. d. July 8, 1897.

LANDIS, DANIEL, 1769-1841. M

b. in 1769. m. Maria Fretz; nine children. Ordained at Deep Run by 1832 for in that year he preached a funeral sermon. d. February 7, 1841.

LANDIS, ELIAS N., 1897- M

b. August 27, 1897 in Lower Salford twp. m. Sallie M. Landis on June 22, 1918; eight children. Farmer and marketman. Ordained on October 25, 1928 at Salford.

LANDIS, GEORGE, 1796-1881. M

b. in Richland twp., Bucks co., on December 20, 1796. m. 1) Barbara Rosenberger on March 28, 1820; four children. m. 2) Mary Bechtel on August 22, 1843; one child. Farmer and turner, later also a miller. Ordained as the first minister, probably soon after Flatland was founded in 1837. In 1857 he moved to Hilltown twp., where in 1859 he purchased the farm and mill of Peter Loux. After 1857 he preached at Blooming Glen. d. August 28, 1881.

LANDIS, HARVEY S., 1870-1922. D

b. July 13, 1870. m. 1) Emma C., daughter of Preacher John Beidler, on October 29, 1892. m. 2) Ellen M., widow of Merari Yocum, nee Yoder, on February 22, 1896; two children. Butcher. Ordained at Swamp on May 16, 1922.

LANDIS, HENRY R., 1858-1925. D

b. November 26, 1858. m. Hannah A. Metz; nine children. Farmer. Ordained at Towamencin on May 26, 1904. d. April 11, 1925.

LANDIS, JACOB. M

Was serving in the Franconia circuit in 1773. He was still active in 1778 when Christian Funk was having difficulties with his coministers (*Spiegel*, p. 24.).

LANDIS, MICHAEL, 1767-1839. M

b. in November, 1767. Ordained at Saucon about 1804 (he served 35 years). d. August 5, 1839.

LANDIS, SAMUEL H., 1819-1880. D

b. May 16, 1819. m. Elizabeth Ehst; fifteen children. Trustee for twenty years at Boyertown. Lived at New Berlinville, about three miles from Boyertown. Deacon at Hereford a few years. d. suddenly at Collegeville while on a trip to Philadelphia, on June 12, 1880.

LANDIS, WILLIAM, 1798-1848. M

b. November 4, 1798. Ordained at Saucon c. 1839. Seceded with Oberholtzer in 1847. d. August 4, 1848.

LANDIS, WILLIAM M., 1869-1923. M

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on July 4, 1869. Grandson of Preacher George of Flatland. m. Salome F., daughter of Bishop Samuel Detweiler on November 12, 1892; four children. Farmer. Ordained on November 2, 1909. First English preacher at Rockhill. d. May 2, 1923.

LANGENECKER, DAVID. M

Preacher in the Chester county churches in 1773, perhaps as early as 1750 if the *Longacre Family History* (p. 91) is correct.

LANGENECKER, JOHN. M

Ordained for the Chester county churches in 1772. Brother of Preacher David. See Longenecker, Daniel, p. 280.

LAPP, ABRAHAM, 1777-1855. D

b. June 2, 1777. m. Anna Rosenberger; seven children. Served the Lexington congregation. Is mentioned as a treasurer in 1841 in the Franconia alms book. d. July 6, 1855.

LAPP, HENRY B., 1853-1931. D

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on February 20, 1853. m. Susan Swartz on September 18, 1879; six children. Harnessmaker. In 1906 his sales were about \$50,000 per year. Ordained deacon at Lexington on November 13, 1906. d. April 21, 1931.

LAPP, JOHN E., 1905- M

b. September 11, 1905. Graduated, Lansdale high school, in 1923. m. Edith R. Nyce on September 15, 1926; two children. Merchant. Ordained at Plain on June 22, 1933.

LAPP, SAMUEL W., 1833-1926. D

b. in Bucks co. on September 26, 1833. m. Sarah, daughter of Preacher John K. Gross of Doylestown, on October 16, 1856; eleven children, including four sons who became bishops, Mahlon, Daniel, George, and Samuel. Farmer. Ordained at Lexington in 1870. After meeting financial reverses and being temporarily inactive as a deacon he decided to move to the West. In 1878 he moved to Ayr, Nebraska. There he served the church until 1902 when he asked to be relieved of active work. d. near Roseland, Nebraska, on July 4, 1926.

LATSHAW, JACOB B., 1796-1867. M

b. May 5, 1796. m. Mary B. Hiestand; seven children. Farmed in East Pikeland twp., Chester co. Ordained for Vincent and Coventry about 1832 (served 35 years). d. February 19, 1867.

LATSHAW, JOHN B., 1804-1878. B

b. April 4, 1804. m. Mary S. Boyer; seven children. Preached 44 years at Vincent and Coventry. Ordained bishop by about 1852. "An able and fluent speaker." d. February 11, 1878.

LATSHAW, JOHN H., 1827-1910. D, M

b. November 2, 1827. m. Sarah M. Stauffer on November 21, 1850; ten children. Farmer. Son of Preacher Jacob B. Ordained deacon for Vincent and Coventry on December 26, 1864 and preacher on June 9, 1887. d. May 3, 1910.

LEATHERMAN, JOHN E., 1909- M

b. August 19, 1909 at Washington, D. C. Attended the academy of Goshen College, 1926-1927; graduated Doylestown high school, 1928.

Clerk for Reading Railway Co., 1928-1932. Ordained at Doylestown December 21, 1933. Graduated from the Advanced Bible Course of Eastern Mennonite School, 1934. Studied at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary 1935-1936. m. Catharine, daughter of Preacher Henry F. Garber of Mt. Joy, Pa., on September 7, 1936. On October 4 of the same year they were appointed missionaries to Africa by the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. On September 22 of that year the Doylestown congregation had released him. Sailed on April 8, 1936.

LEATHERMAN, JOHN M., 1845-1924. M

b. November 1, 1845. m. Mary Myers on January 15, 1870; four children. Carpenter, later a farmer. Ordained at Deep Run the fall of 1889, probably October 25. d. February 1, 1924.

LEATHERMAN, SAMUEL, 1815-1904. B

b. May 1, 1815 in Bedminster twp., Bucks co. m. Sarah Overholt on April 12, 1836; three children. Ordained preacher to assist John Geil in October, 1843. The January 26, 1905 *Herald of Truth* states he was ordained bishop in June, 1876. He spoke very quietly; a large part of the audience couldn't understand his message. d. December 23, 1904.

LEDERACH, JOHN, 1775-1848. D

b. January 24, 1775. m. 1) Maria, daughter of Deacon Jacob Kolb (b. 1745) of Salford; six children. m. 2) Mary Clemmer; seven children. Began signing the Franconia alms audits in 1822; is mentioned as a treasurer in 1841 and 1848. Lederach served the Salford congregation. Farmed at Lederachsville. d. November 7, 1848.

LONGACRE, ISAAC, 1803-1879. D

b. February 20, 1803. m. Hannah Weiss; eight children. Ordained deacon at Worcester about 1841; in that year he began to sign the Skippack alms audits. Was blind the last year or two of his life. d. July 8, 1879.

LONGENECKER, DANIEL (LANGENECKER), M, B (?)

Emigrated from Switzerland to America between 1719 and 1722. Naturalized at the same time as Hans Jacob Bechtel. Settled at Mingo, near Royersford, where he bought 230 acres from the Penn brothers on May 1, 1733. m. Elizabeth _____; six children. It is said that he was the father of Preachers David and John Langenecker of the Franconia Conference, and Preacher Peter of the present Lancaster Conference. Subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith at the 1725 conference. Preached for the Mennonites of the "Manatant." Was a trustee of Coventry in 1751. d. c. 1756.

LOUX, JACOB C., 1822-1895. M

b. October 5, 1822. m. Hannah Rittenhouse on November 21, 1847; five children. Farmer and carpenter. Ordained at Plain May 21, 1867. d. February 15, 1895.

LOUX, PETER B., 1847-1922. B

b. December 29, 1847. m. Elizabeth Hunsberger on December 24, 1871. Carpenter and farmer. Ordained preacher at Blooming Glen June 9, 1896; bishop, September 16, 1919. d. March 30, 1922.

MACK, ANDREW S., 1836-1917. B

b. in Washington twp., Berks co., October 16, 1836. m. Elizabeth B. Halteman on December 4, 1859; six children, including Preacher Jesse and Bishop Noah of the Lancaster Conference. Ordained September 15, 1863 to assist John Z. Gehman, and as bishop on November 6, 1875. As he was the only minister receiving votes in 1875 no lot was used. Probably the strongest leader in the Franconia Conference during the nineteenth century. On November 11, 1897 he urged the organization of a General Conference for the western Mennonites even if the eastern branch of the church should not co-operate. d. October 29, 1917.

MACK, ELMER M., 1890- D

Son of Preacher Jesse. b. March 8, 1890. m. Sallie H. Kratz on March 11, 1911; two children. Farmer. Ordained at Providence November 14, 1933. Has been on the Franconia Mission Board since its organization.

MACK, JESSE H., 1865-1934. M

b. September 25, 1865. m. Mary Mensch; five children. Farmer. Ordained at Providence October 30, 1900. d. October 17, 1934.

MACK, JESSE M., 1904- M

Son of Preacher Jesse H. b. May 2, 1904 at his present residence. m. Sarah R. Detweiler on June 7, 1924; seven children. Farmer. Ordained at Providence on June 29, 1935.

MENSCH, JACOB B., 1835-1912. M

b. April 24, 1835. m. Mary B. Bower; three children. School teacher, later a farmer. Ordained at Skippack in June, 1867. Vigorous personality. Collected many rare historical books. Kept many records, diaries, conference minutes, etc. Left many letters. Opposed the ordination of an English preacher in the district in 1896. d. February 17, 1912.

MEYER, ABRAHAM, 1798-1852. M

b. in 1798. m. Nancy Meyer; four children. Farmer. Served the Deep Run congregation. d. in July, 1852. John Allebach of Rockhill preached at his funeral on July 14.

MEYER, CHRISTIAN, c. 1705-1787. D

b. c. 1705. Son of immigrant Christian. m. Magdalena ———; nine children. Farmer. One of the founders of Salford in 1738. Lived in Franconia twp., and was likely more or less affiliated with the Franconia congregation after its organization. The earliest notation in the Franconia alms book in 1756 speaks of Meyer as treasurer. Christian Funk says he was a "confirmed" deacon. A "confirmed" minister was a bishop. It would appear that Meyer was a bishop deacon, an office now unknown in the conference. d. 1787.

MEYER, HENRY, c. 1750-1832. D

b. c. 1750. m. Susan Smith; twelve children. Farmer. Served at Deep Run. d. in 1832.

MEYER, HENRY, 1774-1857. D

b. October 27, 1774. m. Salome Stover. Farmer and weaver. Son of Preacher Samuel (b. 1744) of Blooming Glen. He served the same congregation. d. October 19, 1857.

MEYER, ISAAC F., 1812-1896. M

b. September 1, 1812. m. first, Elizabeth Kratz on October 6, 1883; twelve children. m. second, Susanna, widow of Jacob Leathermen, on December 20, 1885. Blacksmith, later a farmer. Brother of Preacher Abraham F. (Moyer!). Ordained at Deep Run on June 12, 1843. Retired from active preaching in 1889. Was an influential man. d. January 16, 1896.

MEYER, JACOB, 1721-1790. B

b. in Switzerland in 1721. Came to America about 1741 and settled in Saucon twp., now Lehigh co. Farmer. Ordained preacher in the Swamp district in 1752 and bishop in 1763. d. May 4, 1790 and was buried at Saucon.

MEYER, JACOB, 1730-1778. M

b. January 28, 1730. Brother of Deacon Christian. m. first, _____; three children. m. second, Barbara, daughter of Deacon Michael Derstine, six children. Farmer. Ordained in 1758. Preached at Blooming Glen. d. in 1778 of yellow fever.

MEYER, JACOB, 1776-1835. D

b. June 5, 1776. m. Elizabeth Derstine; eight children. Farmer in Plumstead twp. " . . . elder in Mennonite church" (Deep Run?). d. April 6, 1835. (*Moyer Family History*, p. 339.)

MEYER, PETER. M

Brother of Bishop Jacob. b. c. 1723 in Switzerland. Came to America c. 1741. Fifteen children. Farmed in Springfield twp., Bucks co. Ordained in the Swamp district in 1773. d. _____.

MEYER, PETER, 1761-1834. M

b. January 13, 1761. m. Magdalena Landis; eight children. Farmer. Springfield Church. d. in 1834.

MEYER, SAMUEL, 1734- (?). M

b. June 10, 1734. m. Catharine Kolb; nine children. Lived in Hilltown twp., Bucks co. Therefore Blooming Glen was probably his congregation. He joined in writing the letter to "Upper Canada" (Ontario) in 1801. He was ordained in the Deep Run circuit in 1769. Had long white hair and a flowing beard. Was "a widely known and dearly beloved preacher." d. _____.

MEYER, SAMUEL, d. 1832. M

Farmer. Eight children. Was a son of Bishop Jacob. Also preached at Saucon. d. 1832.

MEYER, SAMUEL, 1765-1847. D

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on July 8, 1765. m. Susanna Bleam on October 3, 1788; ten children. Farmer. "Tall, erect, popular and influential." Blooming Glen Church. d. February 6, 1847.

MEYER, SAMUEL, 1778-1858. D

b. April 23, 1788. m. Catharine _____. Served at Saucon 26 years, therefore ordained c. 1832. d. May 28, 1858.

MEYERS, ABRAHAM, 1817-1895. D

b. April 12, 1817. m. Mary Hiestand; two children. Farmer. Deep Run congregation. d. November 29, 1895.

MEYERS, CLAUDE B., 1899- M

b. January 20, 1899 at Dublin, Pa. m. Mary H. Wismer on March 21, 1923; four children. Carpenter. Ordained at Lexington on December 12, 1933.

MEYERS, HARVEY M., 1893- D

b. February 17, 1893 in Bedminster twp., Bucks co. m. Mary Leatherman on November 20, 1915; three children. Carpenter, now a farmer. Ordained at Deep Run on May 24, 1932.

MININGER, HENRY, 1817-1885. D

b. March 22, 1817. m. Hannah L. Moyer; three children. Farmer. Ordained at Plain in 1847. Is mentioned as a treasurer in 1848 in the Franconia alms book. d. of cancer of the mouth on June 13, 1885.

MININGER, JONAS, 1852- B

b. September 1, 1852. m. first, Annie F., daughter of Deacon Henry Hackman, on October 16, 1875; two children. m. second, Amanda M. Funk on March 14, 1885; nine children. Farmer. Ordained on May 30, 1895 at Plain. Wanted to preach English, but was not permitted to. Ordained bishop at Franconia on October 24, 1905. Is the present senior bishop of the conference.

MINNICH, JOHN. M

The last German preacher at the Germantown congregation. The 1790 census lists a John Minnich and wife of Cheltenham twp., Montgomery co. He was still living after George Hellerman's ordination (c. 1836).

MOLL, PETER, d. 1759. M

Said to have been a brother-in-law of George Bechtel with whom he labored as a minister at Hereford. Landed at Philadelphia on August 19, 1729 and was naturalized the same day. Bought 42 acres from Henry Stauffer on March 20, 1734. Preached at Hereford until his death which occurred on March 19, 1759, his and George Bechtel's deaths being only twelve hours apart.

MOYER, ABRAHAM F., 1822-1902. M

b. September 19, 1822. m. 1) Esther M. Hunsberger on May 12, 1844. m. 2) Anna D. Hunsberger, nee Moyer, on March 31, 1874. Eleven children by his first marriage. As a young man was a store clerk. After

1840, a farmer. Ordained at Blooming Glen on November 6, 1855. When Sunday schools were started he at first opposed, later staunchly supported them. d. February 3, 1902.

MOYER, C. WARREN, 1881- . M

b. in Upper Gwynedd twp., Montgomery co., on May 14, 1881. m. Anna B. Kulp on September 21, 1901; ten children. Farmer, later marketman. Ordained at Towamencin on October 23, 1917.

MOYER, ELMER B., 1888- . M

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on April 27, 1888. m. Lena Stout on September 27, 1910; five children. Factory employee; now a salesman. Superintendent of the Norristown Mission, 1919-1920. Ordained at Souderton on October 28, 1919. Is used as an evangelist at home and outside the Franconia Conference.

MOYER, HENRY B., 1818-1892. M

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on May 21, 1818. m. 1) Maria Clemmer on January 30, 1841; six children. m. 2) Anna Nash, widow of Deacon Samuel H. Moyer, on October 22, 1885. Farmer and tailor. Ordained in Westmoreland co., Pa., in 1843. In 1844 he moved back to Bucks co., and united with the Blooming Glen congregation. Never preached a full sermon nor offered an audible prayer. Made brief remarks; was considered a good adviser. d. April 26, 1892.

MOYER, JACOB C., 1839-1921. M

b. January 18, 1839. m. Eliza Y. Musselman; five children. Farmer. Ordained at Salford on July 21, 1881. d. September 17, 1921.

MOYER, JACOB M., 1891- . M

b. at Souderton on May 31, 1891. Graduated, Souderton high school, 1907, and Pierce Business School, 1908. m. Ida R., daughter of Deacon John F. Detweiler (1867-), on October 16, 1912; six children. Appointed Field Worker of the Franconia Mission Board by the Board and the Bishops on September 2, 1929. Feed and coal merchant. Ordained at Souderton on November 5, 1914.

MOYER, JACOB Y. (MEYER on tombstone), 1791-1859. B

b. December 4, 1791. m. Mary Meyer; six children. Farmer. Ordained preacher c. 1826 (served thirty-three years); was also a bishop. Was the last bishop of the Swamp district who belonged to the Franconia Conference. d. November 7, 1859 and was buried at Springfield.

MOYER, LEVI N., 1864-1936. D

b. April 13, 1864 at his late residence. m. Anna Y. High on January 16, 1886; three sons. Farmer. Ordained at Blooming Glen on October 29, 1908. First deacon to stand to read the Scripture lesson at Blooming Glen. d. October 1, 1936.

MOYER, MICHAEL R., 1836-1912. M

b. in Franconia twp. on July 2, 1836. m. Elmina G. Clemens; five children. Farmer and marketman. Lived on the Schumacher homestead,

now occupied by Jacob Wile. Ordained at Franconia on June 14, 1883.
d. September 24, 1912.

MOYER, NORMAN M., 1892- . D

b. at his present residence on June 17, 1892. m. Ida M. Detweiler on September 3, 1913; six children. Farmer and marketman. Ordained at Blooming Glen on October 25, 1921. Arranges for the supplying of the Perkasio pulpit.

MOYER, SAMUEL, 1806-1877. M

b. September 6, 1806. m. Mary Shimmel on June 20, 1830. Farmer. There is a dispute as to who ordained him. The *Moyer Family History* (p. 373) states that he preached thirty-four years at Saucon. This would mean that he was ordained about 1843 — before the division. But he was for a time identified with Oberholtzer's Conference. He brought charges of unethical conduct against Oberholtzer but these were dismissed by (the latter's) conference. About 1861 Moyer seems to have returned to the Franconia Conference as a minister. He preached alternately at Saucon and Springfield for fourteen years. d. August 24, 1877 and was buried at Saucon.

MOYER, SAMUEL H., 1818-1884. D

b. June 12, 1818. m. 1) Mary Ann Fisher; four children. m. 2) Anna M. Nash on August 30, 1855, four children, one of whom was Deacon Levi N. Ordained at Blooming Glen in 1853. d. January 22, 1884 of typhoid-pneumonia.

MOYER, WILLIAM, 1764-1848. M

b. in Springfield twp., Bucks co., on June 17, 1764. m. Mary Overholt; six children. Farmer. Served in the Swamp district. Was a son of Preacher Peter (b. 1723) d. February 12, 1848 and was buried at Springfield.

MOYER, WILSON R., 1872- . D, M

b. June 2, 1872 near Dublin, Pa. Graduated from West Chester (Pa.) Normal School in 1897. m. Stella A. Derstine on August 23, 1906. Adopted a child. Taught school eleven and one-half years; now a marketman. Ordained deacon at Blooming Glen on June 30, 1914; and preacher there on July 5, 1921. Was on the committee for camp visitation and governmental contacts during the World War. Was a trustee of Eastern Mennonite Home until called to the ministry. Has done evangelistic work in the Franconia and Lancaster Conferences.

MUSSELMAN, JACOB. M

A preacher in the Swamp district. He emigrated from Germany to America in 1743 and purchased land which included the site of the first Swamp meetinghouse. Musselman served as a preacher in the Swamp district.

MUSSELMAN, MICHAEL (MOSELMAN). M

Son of Preacher Jacob. Also served in the Swamp district. Was ordained prior to 1773.

MUSSELMAN, SAMUEL, 1764-1842. B

b. in September, 1764. Son of Michael. m. Hanna _____. Served as preacher and bishop in the Swamp district. d. September 27, 1842.

NASH, JOSEPH, 1753-1830. D

b. September 30, 1753. m. Elizabeth Wismer; five children. Farmer and weaver. Served Deep Run as "Deacon for many years." d. May 31, 1830.

NICE, HANS (NEUSS), d. 1736. M

Emigrated from Crefeld, Germany, to Germantown. Ordained preacher at Germantown on October 8, 1702. Soon withdrew from the church because of a grievance. In 1720 purchased 725 acres of land in Fredrick twp., now Montgomery co. d. July 19, 1736.

NICE, HENRY (HENRICH NEISS), 1804-1883. M

b. in Franconia twp. on March 18, 1804. m. Catharine, daughter of Bishop Jacob Gottshall of Franconia, in 1825; nine children. School teacher; farmer. Ordained at Franconia on June 15, 1839. Active in opposing the Oberholtzer party in 1847. Was a pioneer in Bible school work. d. of a kidney disease on October 9, 1883.

NICE, JAN (NEUSS). D

Brother of Hans. b. at Crefeld, Germany. Emigrated to America c. 1684 and settled at Germantown. m. Elizabeth _____.; six children. Weaver. Ordained in 1690 (or 1698), at the same time as William Rittenhouse was ordained to the ministry. Made his will on September 25, 1719.

NOLD, JACOB. M

Served in the Swamp district, probably in the early nineteenth century. Is said to have moved to Ohio and there served as a bishop.

OBERHOLTZER, ABRAHAM, 1765-1834. M

b. in 1765. Six children. Farmed at Danboro, the present residence of Ezra Myers. Preached at Deep Run. Was appointed by lot to preach at Germantown on December 4, 1796 — when the pulpit was supplied once a month by members of the Franconia Conference. Joined in writing the 1801 letter to Ontario. It is said that he wore the old knee breeches and walked to church. d. May 18, 1834.

OBERHOLTZER, ABRAHAM. D

Served as deacon at Springfield, probably in the early nineteenth century.

OBERHOLTZER, ISAAC, 1815-1887. B

b. in February, 1815 in Bedminster twp., Bucks co. m. Elizabeth Moyer. Ordained preacher c. 1847 at Blooming Glen and bishop soon afterwards, perhaps by 1853. Was gifted as a speaker. He is described as gentle, inoffensive, of a loving disposition and a meek and quiet spirit. He was patient and humble. "There were few like him." Jacob Y. Moyer recalls that Oberholtzer served communion at Springfield. d. December 6, 1887.

OBERHOLTZER, JACOB, d. 1813. M

m. 1) Esther Lederach. m. 2) Elizabeth Clemmer; seven children. Farmed in Franconia twp. Franconia circuit. Began signing the alms audits in 1775. Drew a lot to supply the Germantown pulpit on April 23, 1797. d. December 13, 1813.

OBERHOLTZER, JOHN C., 1780-c. 1865. M

Son of Preacher Jacob. b. December 1, 1780. m. Susanna Moyer; eight children, one of whom was a Preacher Jacob M. of Canada. Cattle dealer and butcher. Ordained preacher at Franconia but was silenced, tradition states, for intemperance. Never signed the alms audits. d. c. 1865.

OBERHOLTZER, JOHN H., 1809-1895. M

b. January 10, 1809. m. 1) Mary Bean (?); m. 2) Susan Moyer. School teacher, locksmith, publisher. Ordained in the Swamp district in 1842. In 1847 he and others separated from the Franconia Conference and formed a new conference still commonly called the "New Mennonites" locally. This conference is now the Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Oberholtzer was a vigorous leader. d. February 15, 1895. (See Part V, Chapter II).

OBERHOLTZER, WILLIAM, 1768- (?). M

b. in Bucks co. on August 27, 1768. m. Gertrude Kulp; eleven children. They first lived in Bucks co., then Northampton co., and finally they moved to Medina co., Ohio. "He was a farmer and minister of the Mennonite church, having been chosen to the ministry prior to his removal to Ohio, and served as minister in Northampton Co., Pa., and Medina Co. Ohio" (A. J. Fretz, *A Genealogical Record of the Descendents of William Nash* . . . , 1903, p. 8).

OVERHOLT, JACOB K., 1826-1891. D

b. September 14, 1826. m. Hannah Bauman November 25, 1849; seven children. Farmer. Ordained at Deep Run on November 1, 1859. Kept a list of baptisms, burials, and visiting ministers from about the time of his ordination until his death. d. April 28, 1891.

OVERHOLT, JOSEPH B., 1860-1927. D

Son of Jacob K. b. July 29, 1860 in Bedminster twp. m. Sallie Y. Leatherman on September 29, 1883; eight children. Farmer. Ordained at Deep Run on October 26, 1905. d. April 4, 1927.

OVERHOLT, WILSON, 1889- . M

b. July 14, 1889 in Bedminster twp. m. Annie G. Leatherman on November 30, 1911. Farmer. Ordained at Deep Run on October 26, 1922.

PANNEBECKER, HENRY (HENRICH). M

From 1775-1792 a Henrich Pannebecker signed the Skippack alms audits. There was a Henry Pannebecker who lived 1717-1792; wife, Rebecca Kuster. But then there was a Preacher Henrich Pannebeker scheduled to supply the Germantown pulpit on January 1, 1797. Were there two preachers named Henry Pennypacker?

PANNEBECKER, MATTHIAS, 1742-1808. B

b. October 14, 1742, a grandson of Hendrick Pannebecker and great-grandfather of Governor S. W. Pennypacker of Pennsylvania. m. 1) Mary Custer, granddaughter of the 1717 Skippack trustee, Hermanus Custer; six children. m. 2) Mary Longacre, widow of Christian Maris on April 19, 1796; one child. Moved from Skippack to Phoenixville in 1774 and purchased a mill on the Pickering Creek. During the Revolutionary War the British destroyed his mill machinery. Apparently the colonial government fined him several hundred dollars for nonparticipation in the war. Thus he suffered from both groups and had the protection of neither. Ordained preacher between 1773 and 1789. Preached at Germantown on August 13, 1797. Preached at Phoenixville. Founded the Charlestown Church. Was a bishop. "He was a miller, and so strict in his conduct that when loaning money to struggling friends as he often did, he refused to take note, bond or mortgage. He would not permit a door in his house to have lock or key. He was the first person in that part of the country to discountenance the use of liquors in the harvest-field." (S. W. Pennypacker, quoted by J. F. Funk, *Accusers*, p. 125.) d. February 15, 1808 and was buried at Phoenixville. "His funeral was attended by people from five counties."

PENNYPACKER, HOWARD S., 1858-1931. M

b. April 15, 1858. m. Mary Cole. Ordained at Skippack on June 8, 1911. d. February 10, 1931.

REIFF, ABRAHAM, d. 1763. D (?)

m. Barbara, sister of Deacon Christian Meyer; seven children. Local historians assert that he was a deacon. Trustee at Salford in 1738. d. in North Coventry twp. in 1763.

REIFF, ABRAHAM S., 1817-1879. D

b. January 16, 1817. m. Sallie D. Landis; nine children. Farmer. Ordained at Worcester c. 1877. d. August 30, 1879. His predecessor, Isaac Longacre, d. July 8, 1879.

REIFF, GEORGE L., 1846-1932. D

Son of Deacon Abraham S. b. December 8, 1846 in Worcester twp. m. Sallie H. Allebach on December 11, 1869; eight children. Farmer. Ordained at Worcester on June 24, 1880. d. October 8, 1932.

RICKERT, ISAAC, 1828-1896. M

b. March 25, 1828. m. Salome, daughter of Deacon Daniel Gross; three children. Carpenter, later a farmer. Ordained about 1853, at Doylestown. Preached until 1895. Was a strong supporter of Sunday schools. d. August 10, 1896.

RITTENHOUSE, MATTHIAS, 1770-1832. M

b. in 1770. m. 1) Catharine ————. m. 2) Mary, widow of Isaac Derstine. Began to sign the Skippack alms audits in 1820. d. May 30, 1832 and was buried at Worcester.

RITTENHOUSE, NICHOLAS (CLAES), 1666-1734. M

b. in Germany or Holland on June 15, 1666. Son of Preacher William. Was in Germantown by 1688. m. Wilhemina Dewees on May 29, 1689; seven children. Ordained at Germantown. Subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith at the 1725 conference. d. 1734.

RITTENHOUSE, WILLIAM, 1644-1708. M

b. at Broich in Westphalia, Germany in 1644. m. ————
c. 1665; three children. Became a citizen of Amsterdam, Holland, on June 23, 1678, signing, "Willem Ruddinghysen of Muelheim, paper-maker" (translated). He was in Germantown by 1688 and in 1690 built the first paper mill in the American colonies, on the Wissahickon Creek in the present Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. Ordained the first American Mennonite preacher in 1690 (or 1698). He read his sermons. He made an effort to have the Confession of Faith printed in English. It was probably Rittenhouse and his fellow countrymen at Germantown who are responsible for the great bulk of the Swiss and Palatine immigrants to America adopting the (Dutch) Dortrecht Confession of Faith. He finally decided to perform bishop activities (administering baptism and communion) but died before he got it accomplished. Was never ordained bishop, nor did he ever serve as a bishop. d. February 18, 1708. See Dr. H. S. Bender's article, "Was William Rittenhouse the First Mennonite Bishop in America." January, 1933 *M. Q. R.*; also Dr. Bender's article, "William Rittenhouse, 1644-1708: First Mennonite Minister in America." April, 1934, *M. Q. R.*

ROSENBERGER, HENRY (HENRICH), 1725-1809. D

b. December 2, 1725. m. 1) Barbara Oberholtzer in 1745. 2) Elizabeth ————. Eight children by first marriage. Farmed in Franconia twp. He also owned property in New Britain twp., Bucks co., and for a time lived there. Began signing the Franconia alms audits in 1770. Christian Funk calls him a deacon, though many recent historians say he was a preacher. There seems to be no evidence to support their statement. d. 1809.

ROSENBERGER, HENRY B., 1844-1921. B

b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on July 27, 1844. One of his school teachers at the Chestnut Ridge school was John F. Funk. He attended the Upper Hilltown Baptist Sunday School early in life. Taught at least one session of singing school. Farmer. m. Mary Ann Shaddinger December 19, 1868. Ordained preacher at Blooming Glen on October 27, 1885, and bishop there on November 21, 1895. Usually preached German. Progressive. Clear voice, effective delivery. People are still quoting from his sermons. d. June 29, 1921.

ROSENBERGER, JOHN H., 1832-1910. M

b. January 7, 1832. m. Anna Clemmer on November 20, 1856; ten children. Farmer. Family histories give his ordination date as October 28, 1884. But the October, 1883 Conference authorized the ordination of a preacher at Lexington. And on August 5, 1884 he wrote to Preach-

er Jacob B. Mensch and called him "fellow-laborer in the vineyard of the Lord." Was inactive for a period due to a financial failure caused by not being able to meet the obligation of paying a note he had endorsed. The church helped him get a start again financially. Not gifted as a speaker but a fine spiritual man. d. September 29, 1910.

RUSH, JACOB M., 1862- . . . M

Grandson of Preacher Isaac F. Meyer. b. April 4, 1862 in Bedminster twp. m. Mary G. Moyer on August 4, 1883; twelve children. Foreman of Plumsteadville Creamery, 1882-1887; farmer since. Ordained at Deep Run on October 24, 1895.

RUTH, ARTHUR D., 1892- . . . B

Son of Isaiah G. Ruth, President of the Franconia Mennonite Mission Board. b. September 10, 1892. m. Florence Landis on March 17, 1917; four sons. Ordained preacher at Lexington on November 27, 1923, and bishop at Franconia on May 29, 1929.

RUTH, BENJAMIN H., 1849-1904. . . D

b. April 24, 1849 in Franconia twp. m. Catharine P. Young on November 9, 1872; four children. Farmer. Ordained at Towamencin on June 1, 1899. d. on February 1, 1904 of la grippe and heart disease.

RUTH, DAVID, d. 1820. . . . B

m. Catharine —————; eight children. Resided for many years in Hatfield twp., Montgomery co. During this time he may have belonged to the Plain congregation. In 1801 he moved to New Britain twp., Bucks co., and is said to have been a member at Lexington. A David Ruth contributed \$2.00 to the erection of the 1813 Plain meeting-house. He first signed the Franconia alms audit in 1796. He was scheduled to preach at Germantown on January 29, 1797. Was a bishop by 1804. d. 1820.

RUTH, HENRY M., 1877- . . . D

b. February 26, 1877. m. Mary G. Landes on November 8, 1902; six children. Farmer and marketman. Ordained at Salford on May 28, 1925.

RUTH, JOSEPH G., 1857-1928. . . B

b. September 23, 1857. m. Mary Kratz on January 1, 1884; five children. Ordained preacher at Lexington on October 24, 1905. Vigorous speaker. Conservative. On the committee for camp visitation and governmental contacts during the World War. Ordained bishop at Franconia on February 25, 1926. d. December 27, 1928. Was succeeded as bishop by his nephew, Arthur D. Ruth.

RUTH, MICHAEL, 1813-1880. . . D

b. in September, 1813. m. Sarah —————. Served at Lexington. d. June 12, 1880.

SCHANTZ, ABRAHAM, 1805-1870. . . D

b. February 23, 1805. Ordained at Swamp in 1849. d. July 27, 1870.

SCHANTZ, JOHN, 1774-1855. M

b. December 19, 1774. Ordained at Upper Milford c. 1828. d. January 8, 1855.

SCHANTZ, JOSEPH, 1814-1881. M

Son of Preacher John. b. April 13, 1814. m. Mary Moyer on December 11, 1842; two children. Farmer. Ordained at Upper Milford in 1844. Went with Oberholtzer in 1847. d. June 23, 1881.

SCHLEIFFER, JACOB. D

N. B. Grubb lists him as a Springfield deacon. He probably served about a century ago. D. K. Cassel calls him T. Schleiffer.

SHELLY, HENRY B. D

One of the organizers of Oberholtzer's Conference in 1847.

SHELLY, HENRY S., 1837-1905. D

Son of the Deacon Samuel M. b. December 25, 1837 in Milford twp., Bucks co. m. Mary B. Leatherman on December 25, 1863; three children. Farmer. Lived in Plumstead twp., then 5 years in Buckingham twp. In 1873 he purchased a farm in New Britain twp., where he remained for life. Ordained at Deep Run on October 22, 1891. d. March 17, 1905.

SHELLY, SAMUEL M., 1796-1873. D

b. in Milford twp., Bucks co., on December 6, 1796. Farmer, first in Milford twp., later in Plumstead. m. Catharine Strunk on March 2, 1819; six children. Ordained by 1849. d. December 25, 1873.

SHOEMAKER, JACOB (SCHUMACHER), 1708-1793. M

b. in the Palatinate on March 31, 1708. Came to America with his parents in 1737. m. 1) Margaret Kunders. m. 2) Susanna Schueler in 1740; eight children. Farmed near Skippack. Naturalized at Philadelphia on April 13, 1743. Ordained at Skippack in 1746. d. June 28, 1793.

SHOWALTER, DANIEL, 1764-1840 (1841?). M

b. December 13, 1764. m. Elizabeth, daughter of Bishop Matthias Pannebecker. Preached at Phoenixville. d. February 21, 1840 (or 1841).

SHOWALTER, JOHN. M

One of the Phoenixville ministers. He probably preached in the first half of the nineteenth century.

SHOWALTER, JOSEPH, d. c. 1802. M

m. Magdalena ———. His will mentions seven children. Bought land in Charlestown twp., Chester co., in 1771. Ordained before 1773. Scheduled to preach at Germantown, February 26, 1797. His will was probated in 1802.

SOUDER, EDWIN A., 1882- M

Son of Preacher Mahlon D. b. June 27, 1882. Quit during his junior year at Sellersville high school. He subsequently attended one term at the Schissler College of Commerce, Norristown, Pa. m. 1) Ella C.

Hackman on August 26, 1906; four children. m. 2) Ruth L. Kraybill on January 20, 1917; six children. Lived at La Junta, Colo., 1906-1908. Farmer; now a marketman. Ordained at Rockhill on July 22, 1924.⁴

SOUDER, MAHLON D., 1859-1924. M

b. January 8, 1859 in Franconia twp. Brother of Historian John D. Souder. m. Lizzie K. Allebach on January 8, 1891; nine children. Farmed on the old Allebach homestead on the Sellersville-Telford state road. Ordained at Rockhill on May 31, 1899. The last German preacher at Rockhill. An unusually successful minister; not oratorical but devoted much time and effort to pastoral work. Successfully supported a movement to continue the Rockhill Sunday School throughout the year. d. April 24, 1924.

SOUDER, MENNO B., 1892- M

Nephew of Preacher Mahlon D. b. March 7, 1892 in Franconia twp. Graduated Souderton high school in 1908; spring term at Kutztown (Pa.) Normal School, 1909. School teacher; later a farmer. m. Esther M., daughter of Deacon Hiram D. Clemmer, on August 24, 1912; two daughters. Ordained at Franconia on October 22, 1914. First English preacher at Franconia.

SOUDER, SAMUEL, 1811-1866. D

b. March 23, 1811. m. Elizabeth Freed; five children. Undertaker and tombstone engraver. Ordained at Rockhill in 1849. d. of tuberculosis on April 7, 1866.

STAUFFER, HENRY, 1779-1856. D

b. January 27, 1779. m. 1) Barbara Bechtel on March 23, 1801; m. 2) Catharine Moyer; m. 3) Barbara Moyer. Eight children by first marriage and four by second. Blacksmith. Served as deacon at Hereford. d. August 18, 1856.

STAUFFER, JOHN, 1762-1822. M

b. October 5, 1762. m. Mary Latshaw; five children. Weaver and farmer in East Coventry twp., Chester co. Preached at Vincent and Coventry. d. October 11, 1822.

STOVER, JACOB C., 1835-1919. M

b. September 20, 1835 in Towamencin twp., Montgomery co. m. Rebecca G. Metz on September 29, 1860; seven children. Farmer. Ordained November 15, 1888 at Towamencin. d. September 21, 1919.

SWARTZ, ABRAHAM. B

The first Deep Run minister. Trustee in 1746. Ordained preacher in 1738 and bishop in 1756. Was still serving in 1778 when Christian Funk was deposed from office. Was blind in the last years of his life. The tradition is that it was his custom after this misfortune to have one of the congregation read a portion of Scripture from which he selected a text and preached a sermon. Where were the deacons? Or did laymen read Scripture in the eighteenth century?

⁴ Inactive ministerially since January 22, 1933.

SWARTZ, I. FRANK, 1860-1937. M
b. in Hilltown twp., Bucks co., on April 27, 1860. Attended Sellersville high school several years. m. Amanda E. Bishop on January 31, 1885. Adopted two children. As a young man he taught singing school; also gave piano and organ lessons. Taught school about twenty years. Ordained at Blooming Glen on the same date as Deacon Levi N. Moyer, October 29, 1908. d. March 17, 1937.

TYSON, JOHN B., 1810-1889. D
b. February 21, 1810. m. Fannie Hallman on September 10, 1837; six children. Farmer. Ordained at Upper Skippack in 1862. Was deeply interested in the church; made several trips to the "west." d. September 12, 1889. (Information from Miss Caroline A. Slotter).

VAN SINTERN, ISAAC, 1662-1737. D
b. at Amsterdam, Holland on September 4, 1662. m. Neeltje Claessen at Amsterdam; four children. Came to Germantown by 1707. Ordained at Germantown on March 22, 1708. Moved to Skippack by 1730. d. August 23, 1737.

WALTER, GEORGE, 1842-1908. D
b. May 12, 1842. m. Maria Sampey on April 4, 1868; four children. Farmer. Ordained at Lexington in 1879. d. January 21, 1908.

WALTER, HENRY, 1801-1867. D
b. January 22, 1801. m. Catharine Godshalk in November, 1825; two children, Preacher John and Deacon George. Ordained at Lexington c. 1842. d. October 20, 1867.

WALTER, JOHN, 1830-1908. M
b. October 20, 1830. m. Rachel Haldeman on December 18, 1857. Farmer. Ordained at Lexington on May 24, 1860. d. May 10, 1908.

WAMBOLD, ABRAM A., 1883-. D
b. April 25, 1883 at his present residence. m. 1) Lizzie F., daughter of Bishop Jonas Mininger, on September 26, 1908. m. 2) Stella A. Fulmer, widow of Eli Detweiler on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1930. Farmer and marketman. Ordained at Plain on November 1, 1917.

WEIERMAN, JOHN. D
A deacon at Plain in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Signed the Franconia alms audits 1779-1784. He evidently took a strong stand against Christian Funk judging by Funk's reference to "John Weirman's . . . sins."

WISMER, ABRAHAM, 1746-1823. M
b. in Bucks co., August 21, 1746. Five children. Preached at Deep Run. He was scheduled to preach at Germantown on June 18, 1797. In 1801 joined in writing the letter to Ontario. He was familiarly known as "Abraham Wismer, the long-beard." A transcript of the Deep Run cemetery includes an Abraham Wismer who died in April, 1823. This was undoubtedly the preacher.

WISMER, ABRAHAM, 1791-1859. D

b. in Bucks co., on November 30, 1791. m. 1) Elizabeth Leatherman on April 13, 1813; seven children. m. 2) Mary Overholt, widow of Abraham Bean, in 1847; one child. Farmed in Plumstead twp. Ordained c. 1829. Was a man of some ability and spent part of his time in "settling estates, clerking sales, writing wills and agreements, etc." Took a forward step for his time when he abandoned the use of the still on the old Wismer homestead. Left many papers of value in historical research. He willed \$100 to the church to be paid to Elder (Deacon) Samuel Shelly or his successor. d. June (or January ?) 25, 1859.

WISMER, ABRAHAM R., 1797-1877. B

b. March 14, 1797. m. Susanna Kolb; four children. Farmer. Ordained preacher at Skippack in 1838 and bishop in 1852. Bishop predecessor of Warren Bean. d. October 15, 1877.

WISMER, BENJAMIN C., 1856-1934. D

Son of Preacher Henry K. b. January 27, 1856. m. Hattie Garges on December 11, 1880. Farmer. Ordained at Skippack on May 30, 1893. d. February 24, 1934.

WISMER, ENOS B., 1868- M

Grandson of Deacon Abraham. b. January 9, 1868 in Bedminster twp. m. Mary P. Overholt of Hilltown twp., on January 12, 1889. Farmer, later a laborer. Living at Eastern Mennonite Home since 1934. Ordained at Deep Run on June 4, 1903.

WISMER, HENRY K., 1823-1910. M

b. February 11, 1823. m. Mary Cole on October 13, 1850; six children. Farmer. Ordained at Skippack on June 5, 1883. d. September 3, 1910.

YODER, ABRAHAM D., 1893- M

b. August 17, 1893 near Blooming Glen. Completed the (two year) Hilltown high school course in 1908. Passed the entrance examinations at Kutztown (Pa.) Normal School but was not able to go on account of finances. m. Laura N. Stout on June 12, 1915; twelve children. School teacher; later store clerk; laborer. Assistant Sunday-school superintendent at Perkasio, 1933-1935. Ordained at Swamp on October 31, 1935.

YODER, HENRY, 1852- D

b. September 5, 1852. m. Mary C. Landis. Ordained at Swamp on November 4, 1897. Was the only official at Swamp, 1912-1919. During this period the pulpit was supplied by visiting ministers from the Franconia Conference. d. August 10, 1930.

YODER, LEVI, 1827-1910. D

b. July 27, 1827. Ordained at Blooming Glen in the fall of 1884. d. September 11, 1910.

YOTHERS, ABRAM W., 1903- M

b. in Bedminster twp., on February 22, 1903. m. Mary Trauger on January 8, 1927; two children. Employed by a marketman. Ordained at Deep Run on October 25, 1934.

YOUNG, ABRAHAM, 1817-1887. M

b. March 4, 1817. m. Mary Moyer on January 17, 1843; three children. Farmer. Ordained at Swamp in 1863. His sermons were very replete with Scripture verses. Silenced on a series of petty charges about 1881. His actions were not sinful but sometimes he acted ill-advisedly. When deposed he challenged the leaders to find a successor. His successor (Enos Beidler) allowed himself to be ordained but then refused to accept the office. d. May 4, 1887.

YOUNG, VALENTINE, 1773-1850. M

b. September 20, 1773. m. Anna ————. "Minister at Saucon 46 years," therefore ordained c. 1804. d. April 27, 1850.

ZETTY, CHRISTIAN (ZETTE), 1766-1843. M

A minister in the Swamp district in the early part of the nineteenth century. The West Swamp cemetery transcript lists a Christian Zette, b. December 25, 1766; wife, Barbara ————; d. March 27, 1843.

ZIEGLER, ANDREW (ANDREAS) c. 1707-c. 1797. B

Son of Michael. b. c. 1707 m. Elizabeth, only child of Preacher Dillman Kolb (1691-1756); four children. Ordained preacher at Skip-pack in 1746 and bishop on May 30, 1762 (1773 letter). Farmed at what is now Lederachsville. Signed the Skip-pack alms audits, 1746-1790. Took a prominent part in the controversy with Christian Funk. Made his will on September 10, 1793; it was probated May 8, 1797.

ZIEGLER, ANDREW, 1737-1811. M (?)

b. March 14, 1737; son of Bishop Andrew. m. Margaret ————; four children. James Y. Heckler says he was a preacher during the Funkite schism (*History of Lower Salford Twp.*, pp. 129ff.) But the Bishop Andreas Ziegler who dealt with Christian Funk was a *fremde* man—a visiting official from another ministerial circuit (*Spiegel*, p. 26) and hence was not a Salford preacher for Salford and Franconia were in the same circuit as early as 1773—likely from the beginning. So Heckler really confused the son with his father. D. K. Cassel followed Heckler and listed the son as a minister and confused the father's bishop activities with his son. Obviously the ordination dates given in the 1773 letter can only refer to the father. So if Andrew Ziegler (1737-1811) was a Salford preacher he must have been ordained after 1773. But where is the evidence that he was ordained? The Strassburger family (p. 436) states that Bishop Andrew's (Senior) land adjoined the Salford church property and that Andrew Ziegler (Senior) preached at Salford after its organization. This also seems to be inaccurate. Ziegler was ordained after Salford was organized. The final question is, where is there evidence that any Andrew Ziegler ever

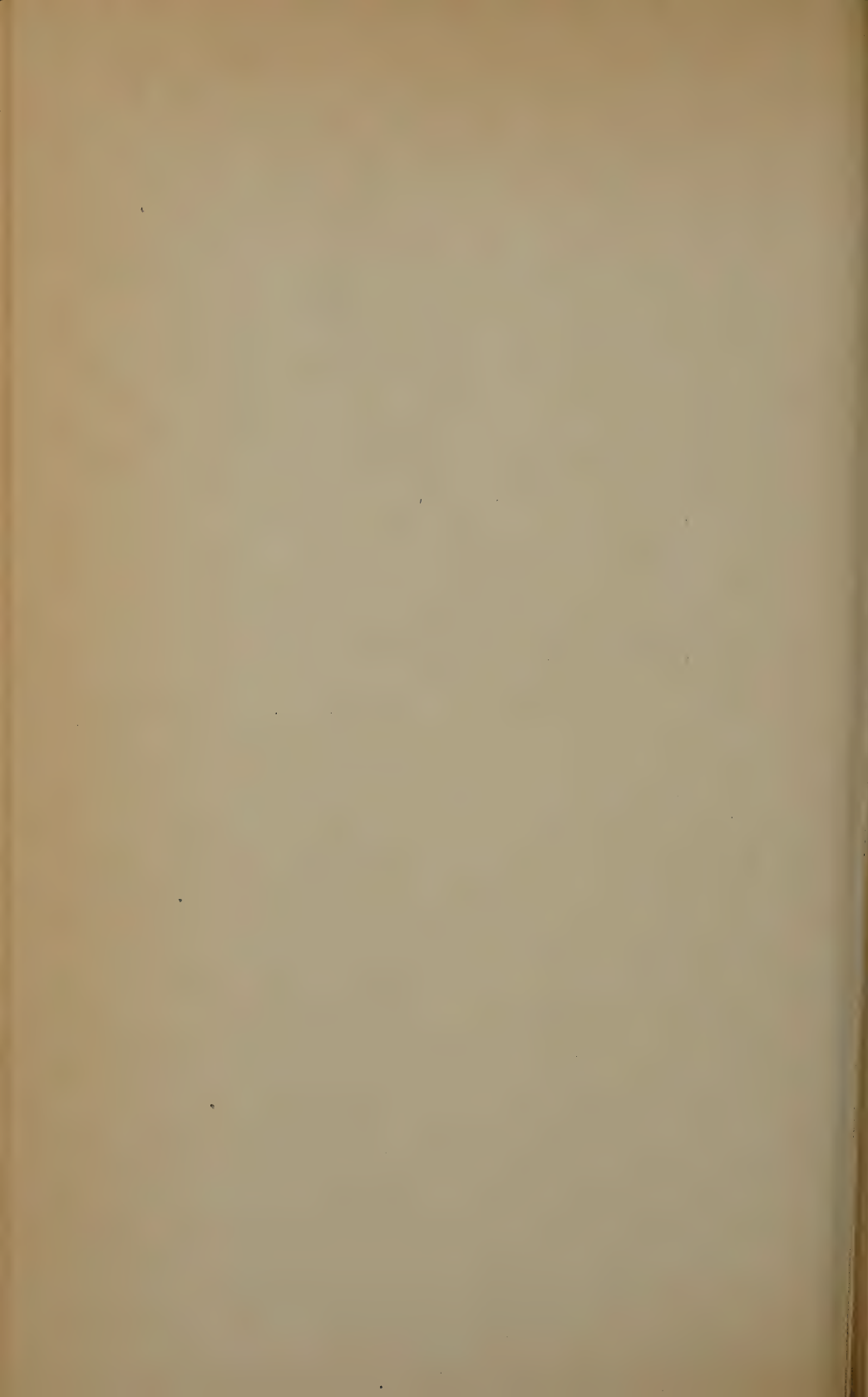
preached regularly at Salford? Andrew, Junior, died on October 26, 1811.

ZIEGLER, MICHAEL, c. 1680- c. 1765. M

b. in Germany c. 1680. Came to America before 1717, for in that year he was living in Perkiomen twp., now Montgomery co. Weaver and farmer, finally owned 650 acres of land. Subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith at the 1725 conference. This would seem to indicate that he was a minister. Signed (made his mark; he couldn't write; while his wife could write — an unusual case in the eighteenth century) the first audit (1738) in the Skippack alms book. Served as treasurer, 1739-1741; 1753-1760. This would seem to indicate that he was a deacon. But it has usually been held that he was a preacher. On February 7, 1763 he made his will. He devised nine pounds to be paid to the Elders of the "congregation of my Township wherein I now reside for the use of the poor" (*Strassburger Family*, p. 432). The will was probated on October 29, 1765. His son Michael (d. 1822) signed the Skippack alms audits about eight times from 1764 or 1775 to 1802. (Since others wrote his name for him it is difficult to ascertain when the father stopped "signing" and the son began.) A note in the book under date of August 27, 1761, speaks of the treasurer as, "Michael Ziegler den Alten." Was Michael, Jr., perhaps a deacon?

Part Four

HISTORY OF ACTIVITIES



Chapter I

EDUCATION; CHRISTOPHER DOCK

EDUCATION¹

American Mennonites as a group are a rural people, thrifty, sincere, God-fearing. Being farmers and having a ministry without any required academic training they have not generally felt the need of a higher education. While the founders of the Mennonite Church in Switzerland were University-trained men, yet in the course of time Mennonites came to actually oppose a higher education. This fact is generally known, but few scholars have made any attempt to account for this attitude. It is an easy matter to criticise a group as some have done and assert ". . . to most of our Germans greatness still means to have a great farm."^{1a} Perhaps Mennonites do have a small appreciation of higher culture. But may there not be a reason?

One author explains the Mennonite aversion to higher education thus, "The institutions of learning with which they had been acquainted in the Old World were either under State or Church control They had good reason to fear both. Learned men from these institutions had been their most bitter enemies, and had in many cases led in the merciless persecution so long waged against them"

"They discarded the Theological school, and consequently the College These might aid in the interpretation of the dead letter of the Scriptures, but their thirst was for the fresh fountain that flows from the everliving Spirit of God in the human soul"

"Higher learning, as it had appeared to them, was full of worldliness, of pride, of boasting, of formalism in religion That in particular individuals learning might exist in connection with the highest type of religion, as in the case of St. Paul, they did not deny; but their experience with learned men had been that of the primitive Christians with St. Paul before his conversion, not afterwards, and they were afraid of them"²

"This opposition never extended to elementary education,³ few grown persons could be found among them at any time who could not read, and

¹ This chapter is chiefly based on published histories. The several reference books used are indicated by footnotes.

^{1a} Sydney George Fisher, *The Making of Pennsylvania*; Philadelphia, (1896, 1924) 1932, p. 133.

² James Pyle Wickersham, LL.D., *A History of Education in Pennsylvania*, Lancaster, Pa., 1886, p. 163.

³ Menno Simons, on "The Education of Children," said, "Have them instructed in reading and writing, bring them up to habits of industry, and let them learn such trades as are suitable, expedient and adapted to their age and constitution." *Complete Works* , Elkhart, Indiana, 1871, I, p. 275.

the men of every period, almost without exception, if not the women, could write and keep accounts. 'There is scarcely an instance of a German, of either sex, in Pennsylvania,' says Dr. Rush, in his *Manners of the Pennsylvania Germans*, written in 1789, 'that cannot read; but many of the wives and daughters of the German farmers cannot write.' . . .⁴

Mennonite children in the Colonial era usually received their education in the Mennonite meetinghouse schools, sometimes taught by the ministers, sometimes by others. An examination of the deeds to properties of the several churches of the Franconia district reveals that almost all the first buildings were intended for both church and school purposes. And even today one frequently sees school and meetinghouse on adjoining lots, — Franconia for example. In some cases the school has moved away from the meetinghouse by degrees. For example, after the 1838 Rockhill meetinghouse was erected the original building continued to be used for school purposes. About the middle of the last century that building was abandoned and school was held in a new building on the Sellersville-Telford state road. Later Beihn's schoolhouse was built only to be recently abandoned for the consolidated school on the Ridge road near Almont.

The instruction given in the early meetinghouse schools was sometimes of a mediocre quality but was usually deeply religious. Mary Latshaw Bower of Boyertown has the following books which were handed down from past generations in her family and many of which were probably used in early Mennonite schools: a German Bible (Halle, 1799); a German New Testament (1807); a German psalter (*Der Psalter des Koenigs Davids*, — 151 chapters); a German catechism (*Katechismus*); Henry Funk's German *Mirror of Baptism* (1744); Johannes Deknatel, *Kurzer Auszug von Menno Simons Schriften* (1758); J. P. Schabalie's (German) *The Wandering Soul* (1768); a German A B C Book (*Das A B C Buchstabilir und Lesebuch*, 1792); Huebner's (German) *Bible History*, Leipzig, 1796; *Das Hundertjaehrige Kalendar Von A. D. 1800 bis 1900* by Samuel Saur; a German prayerbook (*Ernsthafte Christenpflicht*, 1808); Dietrich Philips' *Enchiridion*; Otterbein's *Lesebuch Fuer Deutsche Schulkinder*, 1813; *Anrede an die Jugend*; Jacob Denner's *Betrachtungen*; *Moral Instructor*; *Cruden's Concordance*, London, 1825; *English Reader*, 1825; *Union Speller*, 1838; *Book of U. S.*, 1839; *Ready Reckoner*, 1839; *Human Physiology*, 1847.

Space does not allow for a detailed history of various Mennonite schools. But a reference to a few very early ones is perhaps permissible. A Lehigh county history states, "The first school in the County was established in 1725 in connection with the Swamp church, Lower Milford Township, and remained open until recently. The Mennonites opened a school in Upper Milford, near Zionsville, between 1735 and 1749. A little later a school was established by the same denomination in a fine grove between Center Valley and Coopersburg [Saucon]."^{4a} And of course one cannot pass by

⁴ Wickersham; *op. cit.*, p. 162.

^{4a} James J. Hauser, *A History of Lehigh County* . . . , Allentown, Pa., 1902, p. 34.

the famous Mennonite schools at Skippack and Salford. And that brings us to a very beautiful story,—the life and work of Christopher Dock.^{4b}

CHRISTOPHER DOCK⁵

Christopher Dock was a German Mennonite⁶ who emigrated to America between 1710 and 1714. Pennypacker records a tradition that Dock had been drafted into the German army but had been discharged because of his conscientious objection to warfare. Sometime between 1714 and 1718 Dock opened a school at Skippack and proved to be a very successful teacher. But after a decade of teaching he decided to try his hand at farming. Perhaps his pay was not sufficient for a comfortable living. At any rate Dock became a farmer. In 1735 he bought one hundred acres of land in what is now Upper Salford township, Montgomery county, for fifteen pounds and ten shillings.

But the good Mennonite friends of Dock would not allow him to spend his time raising crops. Others could farm but he could teach. He says, ". . . and I was solicited in the matter until, finally, it came about again that I kept school in these two townships of Skippack and Salford, three days a week in each township." It was in 1738 that he returned to the schoolroom. The rest of his life until his death in 1771 he spent in teaching the boys and girls of Skippack and Salford. For four summers he also taught at Germantown.

Dock was an unusually successful teacher. It is an interesting fact that although the Mennonites have been harshly criticized for their opposition to higher education in colonial America, it was a Mennonite teacher who wrote the first American systematic treatise on pedagogy. In 1750 Christopher Saur, the noted Dunkard publisher of Germantown, decided to ask Dock to write a treatise on pedagogy "in order, as he said, that other school teachers whose gift was not so great might be instructed; that those who cared only for the money they received might be shamed; and that parents might know how a well arranged school was conducted, and how themselves to treat children." But Dock was an exceedingly conscientious man. How could he be prevailed upon to attempt a task which might bring honor to him? Saur hit upon this plan. He wrote to Dock's warm friend, Dielman Kolb (d. 1756), the Mennonite preacher, and asked him to approach Dock on the matter. Dock agreed to write the treatise, based partly on a number of questions furnished by Saur, but stipulated that it should not be published during his lifetime. Accordingly Dock wrote his *Schulordnung*, "School Management," completing it in 1750. The manuscript was sent to Saur where it lay for almost twenty years.

^{4b} See Samuel W. Pennypacker, *Historical and Biographical Sketches*, Philadelphia, 1883, pp. 89-153. All quotations, unless otherwise indicated are from Pennypacker.

⁵ He himself spelled his name "Duck" in his will.

⁶ He is so regarded by Pennypacker and other capable historians. It is claimed that Bishop John F. Funk doubted if he was a Mennonite, but there is no evidence to support Funk's supposed opinion.

The most recent book on Dock was written by Martin G. Brumbaugh, Ph.D., LL.D., *The Life And Works of Christopher Dock*, Philadelphia and London, 1908.

In the meantime Saur did publish some of Dock's writings in his *Geistliches Magazien*. Volume I, Number 33 (1764) contained, "A Copy of a Letter which the Schoolmaster Christopher Dock, Wrote out of Love to his Pupils, Who Were Then Still Living, for their Teaching and Admonition" (title, translated from the German). Dock signed his name to the letter and Saur explained, "The printer has considered it necessary to put the author's name to this piece; first, because it is specially addressed to his scholars, though it suits all men without exception, and it is well for them to know who addresses them; and secondly, the beloved author has led, and still in his great age leads, such a good life that it is important and cannot be hurtful to him that his name should be known"

Number 40 of the same magazine contains, "One Hundred Rules of Conduct For Children." Pennypacker considers them the first American publication on etiquette. Some are quite amusing. "Do not look upon another's plate to see whether he has received something more than you" "Chew your food with closed lips and make no noise by scraping on the plate." Through all of Dock's writings there is a deep religious note. "Before going to sleep consider how you have spent the day, thank God for His blessings, pray to Him for the forgiveness of your sins, and commend yourself to His merciful protection." ". . . accustom yourself to awaken at the right time in the morning without being called" "Offer up the morning prayer, not coldly from custom, but from a heart-felt thankfulness to God, Who has protected you during the night, and call upon Him feelingly to bless your doings through the day. Forget not the singing and the reading in the Bible."

Volume II, Number 41 of the *Geistliches Magazien* contained, "A Hundred Christian Life-Rules for Children." Pennypacker attributes the authorship to Dock. And in Number 15 of the same volume are "Two Edifying Hymns (Lieder), which the Pious Christoph Dock, Schoolmaster of the Skippack, Left Behind for the Meditation of His Scholars and All Others who Read Them." Pennypacker lists seven of Dock's Hymns.

1. Kommt, liebe Kinder, kommt herbey.
2. Ach kommet her ihr Menschen Kinder.
3. Mein Lebensfaden lauft zu Ende.
4. Ach Kinder wollt ihr lieben.
5. From seyn ist ein Schatz der Jugend.
6. An Gottes gnad und milden Segen.
7. Allein auf Gott setz dein Vertrauen.

All but numbers 5 and 6 were included in the first American Mennonite hymnbook, *Zions Harfe*, when it was compiled and published in 1803.

Dr. Brumbaugh adds three more of Dock's hymns to the list,

"Thr suender kommt gegangen"

"Suesser Christ"

"Das Gueldene A B C."

These beautiful German hymns must have been a means of blessing to many devout spiritual brethren of Dock in the century and a half since their composition.

Printing hymns of over two dozen stanzas is rather expensive. But perhaps reading an English translation of one of Dock's hymns will be more interesting than any historical data can be. S. W. Pennypacker's translation is used. He tried by means of a very free translation "to preserve the thought, versification, metre and rhyme—a somewhat difficult task." One stanza of the original German will be given. The hymn is number 156 in the *Zions Harfe*.

Ach Kinder wollt ihr lieben,
 So liebt was Liebens werth,
 Wollt ihr ja Freude ueben,
 So liebt was Freude werth;
 Liebt Gott, das höchste Gut,
 Mit Geist, Herz, Seel und Muth,
 So wird euch solche Liebe
 Erquickten Herz und Muth.

* * *

O children, would you cherish
 A worthy lasting love
 The good that does not perish
 Is only found above.
 Seek God, the highest goal,
 With spirit and with soul,
 Then you will find a rapture
 The heart cannot control.

Is indolence a pleasure?
 Does worldliness allure?
 Then know that short the measure,
 For life is never sure,
 And through eternity
 The soul will ever be,
 The time for pardon wasted,
 In woful misery.

Saint Luke has plainly written
 About a man of pride—
 With riches was he smitten
 And worldliness beside—
 He lived a little while,
 Luxurious in style,
 And fixed his heart on pleasures
 That only do beguile.

In purple was he clothed,
 The whiles he lived on earth,
 Soon vanities were loathed
 And pride of little worth.

Death put an end to gain—
He found himself in pain—
And from the direst sorrow
He ne'er was free again.

Then piteous was his wailing
To father Abraham;
"O come and help me failing
In this tormenting flame—
If I could only sip—
If Lazarus would drip
A little drop of water
Upon my parching lip."

No hope to him was given,
No answer from the Lord
To say that he while living
Chose good for his reward.
And so beloved child,
Take this for warning mild,
Abandon idle living,
To good be reconciled.

It is a truthful story
As Christ himself does teach,
Not simple allegory
Or other idle speech,
And also can we say
That on the judgment day
The one will be rejoicing,
The other mourning stay.

Christ tells us very plainly
The gate is open wide
And many enter vainly
In worldliness and pride;
The way is very broad,
It is an easy road,
Which leadeth to destruction
And sorrow's dread abode.

We read with greatest wonder
In many places more,
That Christ with trumpet's thunder
While angels round him soar,
Will come upon that day,
The Holy Scriptures say,
When everything material
Will crash and pass away.

And then must all assemble
 To meet his searching glance,
 Both strong and weak will tremble
 To see that countenance,
 The reckoning to hear,
 What each in his career
 Has done of good or evil—
 Oh, children, think and fear.

Our secret inclinations
 Will then be open thrown,
 Our strongest aspirations
 Will in the light be shown,
 And he who then with heed
 The Book of Life can read,
 And find his name there written
 Is fortunate indeed.

He who is so appointed
 Aside at Christ's right-hand,
 Along with the anointed,
 Among the sheep will stand,
 To him great joy will be
 For all eternity,
 No tongue can give description
 Of his felicity.

While bells are softly ringing,
 The angel music choir
 With chanting⁷ and with singing,
 Will enter through the door
 To Zion's golden town,
 On mortals looking down,
 And every lamb of Jesus
 Shall then receive his crown.

O truest shepherd Jesus!
 Count us among thine own,
 Come quickly and release us,
 Amid enticements thrown,
 For here does Satan old
 His wicked nets unfold
 And ever seek to win us
 With honors and with gold.

⁷ The German *Jauchzen* really means to shout with joy.

As long as we are living
Is danger ever here,
Unless assistance giving
Thy helping hand be near.
Thy Holy Spirit send,
That he support may lend
So that we faithful follow
Thy word unto the end.

Whene'er our hearts are sinking
Within the narrow way,
Assist us then in thinking
That any wish to stray
May, from thy judgment stool
Into the fiery pool,
Us hurl below forever
Where waters never cool.

Whenever earthly rapture,
Or arrogance or lust,
Shall with allurements capture,
Oh! help us to distrust—
Enable us to see
What endless misery
For transitory pleasures
Will ever ready be.

O let us be o'erflowing
With true humility;
The lamp of faith be glowing
That all of us may see
False glimmerings to shun;
The world be overdone;
The victory o'er fleshly things
By lowliness be won.

Oh! send us from above,
Thou bridegroom of the soul!
Thou source of purest love!
A living burning coal
To kindle in the heart
The fear of Satan's art
That all things may be hateful
Which would from thee us part.

The virtuous, oh Father!
Acceptable to thee,
And all the children gather
Who still unready be

That, spread on every side,
 Thy kingdom may be wide,
 And that Thy will be followed,
 Thy name be glorified.

And since the way to Jordan,
 The long and narrow road,
 Is full of toil and burden,
 The Cross a weary load,
 Oh, give us patience, Lord,
 Thy precious help afford,
 Withhold not from our failings
 Thy sweet forgiving word.

If we the way pursuing
 Should ever turn aside
 Unto our own undoing,
 Induced by worldly pride,
 As often indeed has been,
 And for the grievous sin
 Might punishment severest
 Deservedly begin.

Oh, God, and glorious Father,
 Our failures do not heed,
 But for thy Son's sake rather
 Be merciful indeed,
 So that when sorrows toss
 No earthly trial or loss,
 Not even death, itself, can
 Divide us from the cross.

Then praise to God above
 Upon his highest throne,
 To Him we offer love,
 To Christ His blessed Son,
 And to the Holy Ghost
 In whom we place our trust,
 They bring at last together
 The pious and the just.

* * *

But to return to the "School Management" manuscript! In 1769 some of Dock's friends did finally succeed in winning his consent to its publication. But Christopher Saur, Senior, died in 1758 and Christopher, Junior, could not find the manuscript! The young publisher, "Christoph Saur," inserted a notice in his German newspaper stating that a manuscript which he wished to publish had been lost for two months. "The contents

consist of a well-prepared School-Management which looks pretty old, for it was written quite long ago, and it is rolled up as one usually rolls up writing paper If any one should have through an oversight received this manuscript for writing-paper, let him search (it may easily be that manuscript) and either bring or send it back to the printer, and he shall receive of me ten shillings for his reward and as much writing paper as he thought he had, besides!"⁸

This notice didn't please the public. Some people suggested that Saur purposely mislaid it because there was something in the treatise he didn't like. And Dock sent Saur word that he shouldn't bother about the lost manuscript; he didn't want it published during his life anyhow and he was "very well pleased that it had been lost!" But a year later, 1770, Saur did find it and at once published it "in a large octavo pamphlet of fifty-four pages." A second edition was published by Saur in the same year, and in 1861 the Mennonites of Eastern Ohio (at Columbiana) reprinted the treatise from a copy of the second edition.

It is a remarkable book. Published at a time when other educators advocated the views of Nathaniel Green's father

"Students," he said, "like horses on the road,
Must be well lashed before they take the load"

Dock advocated winning both the love and respect of his pupils. And his was no mere sentimentalism! He took a personal interest in each one of his pupils, awarded each stage in his progress with suitable gifts (such as illuminated writings, pictures of birds, etc.), or honors and appealed to their (justifiable) pride at the ability to read and write well and live right. He taught three days a week at Salford and three at Skippack and arranged to carry letters from the pupils of one school to those of the other. Nor was misconduct overlooked. But he loved his children and understood their problems. "The slap with the hand, the hazel switch, and the birch rod are all means to prevent the breaking forth of the evil, but they are no means to change the depraved heart" For example children whom he found cursing were first asked if they understood what they said. Often they didn't. He found that the children were often innocent and some adult was responsible. But "up to this time Pennsylvania has not been so much infected with this evil and poisonous contagion as those lands which have been long overrun and harrassed with bloody wars."

Dock tells how he deals with various offenses and tries to lead all his pupils to ". . . a love of learning. When the children have reached this point it is no longer so hard with them or the schoolmaster. When all who stand with me in this calling consider rightly how dear such young souls are in the eyes of God, and that we must give an account of our housekeeping, although they may have the power to punish, they will much rather work with me to bring the young into such a state that they will do willingly out

⁸ Deacon Jacob A. Freed gave John D. Souder a fragment of Saur's newspaper on which this notice is published (in German).

of love what before they had to be driven to with the rod” Dock did believe in using the rod on obstinate children “who have no hesitation in doing wrong,” but at the same time he addressed them “ with earnest exhortation from the Word of God, to see whether the heart can be reached.”

Like most men who hold to ideals far in advance of their day Dock seems to have attracted little attention in the field of education. And yet one must wonder if there is a reference to him in a New England reader, *The Columbian Orator*, Boston, 1797, in which a foolish untrained school teacher is made to say, “I never flog my scholars I have a rare knack of *flattering* them into their duty. And this, according to a Celebrated Doctor at Philadelphia, whose works I have heard of, though I never read them, is the grand criterion of school government this same great Doctor does not believe that Solomon and others really meant *licken*” etc. (Sixth Edition, Troy, 1815, p. 159). In his community Dock must have been loved as few men ever are, and his name and fame lived after him. John D. Souder’s mother for example, told him of a wonderful school teacher who wrote *The Golden A B C Song*. Souder is therefore certain she had heard of Dock.

Dock’s wife was already dead when he wrote his will (February 1, 1762). He was at that time survived by two daughters, Margaret, married to Henry Stryckers, who resided on Dock’s farm in Upper Salford township; and Catharine, wife of Peter Jansen of Skippack. As Dock had no sons his name is not found among the Franconia Conference Mennonites today. Dock’s strong Christian faith is reflected in his will when he speaks of his death and the burial of his body, “. . . . nothing doubting but at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty Power of God.”⁹

A more beautiful character and a sweeter-souled Christian would be hard to find. “It was his custom each evening after dismissing his pupils to remain in his schoolroom to pray. With the roll of his pupils spread before him, he would kneel and ask God to forgive him for any act of injustice or of neglect toward any pupil in his school that day. He also asked, as he pronounced each pupil’s name, that God would help him on the morrow to do the best things for each one.

“One evening in the autumn of 1771 he did not return from his school at the usual time. A search was made and he was found in his schoolroom on his knees — dead. Thus ended in prayer for his pupils a life singularly sweet and unselfishly given to the welfare of those whom he believed God had divinely appointed him to teach.”¹⁰

His place of burial is not known. His wife was probably buried at the Salford Mennonite cemetery; if so, his body probably also rests there. On October 24, 1915 a monument was unveiled in the Lower Skippack Men-

⁹ The will was published in *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pa., April 1, 1923, pp. 23-25.

¹⁰ Brumbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

nonite cemetery. The Historical Society of Montgomery County erected the marker. Present at the unveiling were educators, ministers, folks of the community (many of whom were likely descended of Dock's pupils), historians and two former governors of Pennsylvania, Pennypacker and Brumbaugh. The inscription on the monument reads,

HERE CHRISTOPHER DOCK, WHO IN 1750 WROTE THE
EARLIEST AMERICAN ESSAY ON PEDAGOGY, TAUGHT SCHOOL AND
HERE IN 1771 HE DIED ON HIS KNEES IN PRAYER.

Chapter II

HYMNODY AND LITERATURE

HYMNODY

The names of the first hymnbooks used by the Germantown and Skip-pack Mennonites are not known. In their 1708 letter to their Holland brethren the Germantown Mennonites say, "The members here are poorly supplied with psalmbooks." It would be interesting to know what psalmbooks, if any, were sent to America in response to this appeal.

The wave of Palatine emigrants which began in 1709 and continued for a few score years probably brought the old Swiss hymnal, the *Ausbund*, to Skip-pack and Conestoga. The nucleus of the *Ausbund* was fifty-one hymns which were written by Swiss and South German Anabaptists who were imprisoned at Passau, Bavaria, between 1535 and 1537. Many of these prisoners suffered martyrdom. Two men, Hans Petz and Michael Schneider, wrote about half of these original hymns.

"Being martyr hymns and written by men in prison awaiting death sentence, one would naturally expect them to be permeated with a spirit of deep humiliation and an overwhelming sense of dependence upon the God whom they trusted for deliverance. And so they are. The dominant tone running through all of them is one of great sorrow, deep loneliness, of protest against the world of wickedness which is putting forth every effort to crush the righteous. It is by no means a tone of despair, however. Through it all there is a note of triumph, an unspeakable conviction that God will not forsake his own, and although he is leading them along the way of sorrow and tribulation, and often through the very valley of the shadow of death, the road leads unerringly straight through to everlasting life."¹

The first edition of the *Ausbund* appeared in 1564. A second edition appeared in 1583. One of the best-known hymns of the *Ausbund* is the one (No. 131) beginning,

"O Gott Vater, wir loben Dich
Und deine Guete preissen"

"It is thought that at least twelve different editions appeared in South Germany and Switzerland, . . . the final one being published in Basel in 1838. It was in common use in Switzerland, the Palatinate, and in Alsace-Lorraine until well toward the middle of the past century. It was not used in Holland and North Germany, although some of the hymns . . . were found among the Anabaptists of both sections."²

In 1742 Christopher Saur of Germantown published the first American edition of the *Ausbund*. It was reprinted at Germantown in 1751, 1767,

¹ Dr. C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania* . . . , Norristown, Pa., 1929, p. 332.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 340, 341.

1785, 1815; Lancaster 1834, 1846, 1856, 1868, 1880, 1908, 1912; Elkhart, Indiana, 1880, 1905, 1913; Kutztown, Pa., 1922. It is doubtful if *Ausbund* copies were very numerous in the Skippack settlement at any time, for so few copies are to be found in the homes of the Franconia Conference Mennonites. This scarcity of hymnbooks was likely the occasion of the old custom of "lining" the hymns as they were sung.

The official hymnbook of the Franconia Mennonites was *Zions Harfe* (*Zion's Harp*),—"Die Kleine Geistliche Harfe der Kinder Zions . . .," printed first in 1803 by Michael Billmeyer of Germantown, "Auf Verordnung der Mennonisten Gemeinden,"—"Upon the order of the Mennonite Churches." The story of the compilation of this hymnbook has very curiously been preserved in a letter written in 1821 by a deacon in the Lancaster Conference, Martin Mellinger of Lampeter township. Under date of February 20, 1821, Mellinger wrote to his brother-in-law, John Weber, of Kindenheim, in the Palatinate, Germany.

" . . . And now I want to tell you how it went when the first book was to be printed. Since we had all sorts of hymnbooks, the old Swiss songbooks,³ and Reformed hymnbooks,⁴ and not enough of what we had, our brethren decided to have a hymnbook printed for ourselves. Brethren and choristers were to select beautiful and fitting hymns, after which they were to be collected and given over to 3, 4, or 5 men. These men were to select enough out of the hymns which had been collected so that the hymnbook would not be too large. After a time two Skippack⁵ brethren came together with two of our leading bishops in my house to examine the hymns which had been collected. The Skippack brethren, since they have a large and strong church as well as a large district and are well-trained in singing,⁶ had brought together enough hymns for a complete hymnbook and had 3,000 subscriptions in advance. We also had many hymns from Virginia,⁷ from Jacob's Creek,⁸ and from our vicinity, which were to go into the book. So it was feared that the book would become too large. In addition our brethren wanted to include a number of psalms and notes. In short, the difference was so great that the Skippack brethren said that their hymns had been handed in by so many brethren and dared not be omitted, and so many had already subscribed, and there was a lengthy discussion. The second day the Skippack brethren said that they were only delegates, and they saw no other way then to have their book printed in Germantown where

³ The *Ausbund*.

⁴ Probably Ambrosii Lobwasser's *Neu vermehrtes Gesangbuch*, published for the first time at Germantown in 1753, and again at the same place in 1763 (Dr. Harold S. Bender). Dr. Bender found several unused copies of the second edition in the attic of the Groffdale meetinghouse in Lancaster county.

⁵ Now called the Franconia Conference district.

⁶ Congregational singing is still strongly emphasized among the Franconia Mennonites. The rudiments of vocal music are taught over and over again in old-fashioned singing schools now conducted in the meetinghouses.

⁷ The Mennonite settlement in the Shenandoah Valley.

⁸ The vicinity of the present Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, in Westmoreland county.

they had a good printer and bookbinder, which was so handy for them that they could look after everything, and we could print ours in Lancaster. And so the outcome was that they had as many printed as we. But that made no difference to us or them, for we love one another, and we visit them and they visit us every year. And still it is a pity that it had to be so. For many years already, many families have been moving to Virginia,⁷ Jacob's Creek,⁸ and Canada,⁹ and each has his hymn-book and then they have different hymnbooks when they come together"¹⁰

The preface of the *Zions Harfe* explains that the Davidic Psalms were then customarily found in the meetings, yet not nearly all people had books and in many meetings two or even three kinds of books were to be found. So it was decided to print a songbook that there might thereby be more uniformity in the praise and worship of God. Consequently a collection of songs from various spiritually-rich songbooks was made, of which songs the greater part could be sung to familiar tunes. The book is divided into two major parts, a selection of psalms, and a collection of several hundred hymns. The hymns are topically arranged and cover a wide range of subjects and occasions; worship, before and after the sermon; Christmas hymns; New Year songs; hymns of the holy angels, of the passion of Christ; songs of Pentecost; hymns of the love of God, of the creation, of divine providence, of holy baptism, of communion, of the Christian life, of true faith, of God's Word; hymns of prayer, repentance, of spiritual watchfulness and of spiritual warfare, of spiritual marriage (to Christ), of brotherly love, on following Christ, of the believer's cross and sufferings, of a complete surrender to God; songs of praise, lamentations; hymns on the true church of God; funeral hymns; hymns on the last Judgment, of heaven and eternal life; hymns of comfort; morning songs, evening songs; songs for mealtime (e. g. "Nun danket alle Gott Mit Herzen, mund und haenden . . ."); of common need (of divine grace); of death, of the frailty of life; of renunciation of the world; of spiritual opposition; songs of seedtime and harvest; and parting hymns.

Number 193 is patterned after the Song of Solomon,

DIE BRAUT

"Ach Jesu mein bruder und braeutigam komme!
Es ruffet der geist und die braut deine fromme
In liebes-begier:
Ach! komme zu mir O Jesu, Mein Jesu!
Und hol mich zu dir."

⁹ Soon after the Revolutionary War Mennonite families from Lancaster, Bucks, and Montgomery counties began to move to Ontario.

¹⁰ The original Mellinger letter is in the possession of the Schmidt-Weber family, Worms, Germany. This translation by Harold S. Bender appeared in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, January, 1931, pp. 56, 57. The footnotes are based on those of Dr. Bender.

CHRISTUS

“Ich komme, und will dich schoen schmuecken und zieren
 Und dich in das haus meines Vaters ein fuehren;
 Drum jauchze nun laut: O herzenste braut!
 Dieweil dich Dein koenig So gnaedig anschaut.”

Joy in the midst of tribulation is the dominant note in Number 291,

“Freu dich sehr, o meine seele!
 Und vergiss all noth und quaal,
 Weil dich aus der jammer-hoehle
 Christus ruft zum himmels-saal:
 Aus der truebsal, angst und leid,
 Sollst du fahren in die freud,
 Die kein ohr nie hat gehoeret,
 Und in ewigkeit auch wachret.”

One sees a somewhat pathetic figure in an unfriendly world in Number 258,

“Jesu, wahres Gottes-Lamm,
 Meiner seelen leben,
 Ach mein liebster braeutigam!
 Dem ich mich ergeben,
 Lass mich nur ein laemmlein sein,
 Unter deiner heerde,
 Dir ergeb ich mich allein
 Hier auf dieser erden.

“Stehe deinem schaefflein bey,
 In den dunklen tagen,
 Mach es von dem kummer frey,
 Lass es nicht verzagen,
 Weil die zeit verlaengert sich,
 Und die feinde toben,
 Staerke mich nur vestiglich
 In den leidens-proben.”

Number 148 is a burst of praise,

“Nun lobet alle Gottes Sohn,
 Der die erloesung funden;
 Beugt eure knie vor seinem thron,
 Sein blut hat ueberwunden:
 Preis, lob, ehr, dank, kraft, weisheit, macht,
 Sey dem erwuerkten lamm gebracht.”

Zions Harfe was the first American Mennonite hymnbook and was the standard hymnal of the Franconia Conference Mennonites until the German was displaced by English during the last three or four decades. It was reprinted at Germantown in 1811 and 1820; at Northampton, Pa., in

1834; at Doylestown, Pa., in 1848; at Lancaster in 1870, and at Elkhart, Indiana, in 1904.

At the present time the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* (the *Supplement* was added in 1911) is in general use among the Franconia Mennonites. This hymnbook was published at Elkhart, Indiana, in 1902. As a sort of transition book *Hymns and Tunes*, Elkhart, Indiana, 1890, was used in a number of churches along with the *Zions Harfe*. A number of churches have adopted the *Church Hymnal Mennonite*, Scottsdale, Pa., 1927. A much better type of hymns are to be found in this hymnbook. The Franconia Mennonites have made a radical change from the long narrative hymns of their forefathers to the lively "Gospel songs" current in many religious circles today. Many people seem to desire choruses and songs with a rapid movement. The author hopes for the time when the Mennonites will discontinue the use of these light songs and will return to the more worshipful and doctrinal hymns of the *Church Hymnal* (1927). The didactic value of solid doctrinal hymns cannot be overlooked. One minister^{10a} says, "People who have sung in unison the articles of their faith, are invincible."

The Franconia and Salford congregations adopted the *Church Hymnal* but use a special edition containing an appendix of 150 German hymns compiled by Bishop A. G. Clemmer.

The songbooks used in the Sunday schools of the district are named in the several congregational histories. For many years, and even more or less at the present time, non-Mennonite books have been used.

LITERATURE

In 1773 three Bucks and Montgomery county bishops wrote to their spiritual brethren in Holland, ". . . you further ask whether we have books with Confessions of Faith, and in what number? In the first place, we recognize the Holy Scriptures, especially the Evangelists,¹¹ for our chief rule. Besides, we have the writings of Menno Simons, in German and Dutch; also, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, of T. J. van Braght, in the German language, which has been printed here in folio,¹² and the *Golden Apples*,¹³ the above-mentioned Confession of Faith¹⁴ in the German, Dutch and English languages, and many other books which our old preachers have published and left behind for us, as Joost Hendricks, Willem Wynands, Jacob Denner and many others.¹⁵ For the present the Scripture is preached in

^{10a} Dr. John Franklin Troupe, *Interviewing God* . . . : New York, 1930, p. 167.

¹¹ The Gospels.

¹² *Der Blutige Schau-Platz oder Martyrer-Spiegel* . . . , Ephrata, Pa., 1748-49.

¹³ *Gueldene Aepfel*, Ephrata, Pa., 1745.

¹⁴ The (1632) Dortrecht Confession of Faith, printed in German in 1664 at Amsterdam, and in English at Amsterdam in 1712 and at Philadelphia in 1727.

¹⁵ Denner's sermons were first published in Europe in 1730. He and Wynands were preachers at Hamburg-Altona, Germany. Johannes Deknatel (1698-1759), a Mennonite preacher of Amsterdam, also left a book of sermons.

the German language in all of our congregations; and in the most with great care, reverence and love, as the apostle directs. . . ."

The early Franconia Mennonites were perhaps more literary than the Mennonites of any other section of America.¹⁶ The early pioneers to Germantown and Skippack brought with them the Dutch *Martyrs' Mirror*; the writings of Menno Simons, especially the *Fundament-Buch*; Dirck Philips', *Enchiridion or Hand Book of the Christian Doctrine and Religion*; J. P. Schabalie's, *The Wandering Soul*; the prayer book (apparently used by the Palatine Mennonites) *Die Ernsthafte Christenpflicht*; catechisms (*Katechisms*); *Christliches Gemuehts-Gespraech* or *Conversation on Saving Faith* by Gerhard Roosen; and their hymnbooks.

A number of non-Mennonite books were also widely used. In this group should be mentioned John Haberman's prayerbook, *Das Kleine Gebetbuch*; John Arndt's *Wahres Christenthum* and *Paradies-Gaertlein*; and Gerhard Tersteegen's *Geistliches Blumen-Gaertlein*. Two other books found in almost every Mennonite home were Huebner's *Biblische Historien* (*Bible History* or *Bible Stories*), and Stark's *Handbuch*, a prayerbook.

"All of these books were used in the German and were printed over and over again for the German population of Pennsylvania and adjoining states. Beside these books, both Mennonite and non-Mennonite, the native American literary production had but a small place, both in size and influence" (Bender).

In 1708 the five ordained Mennonites of Germantown wrote a letter to the Mennonites of Holland in which they asked for literature, ". . . The congregation here is still rather weak to have anything printed. . . . Willem Rittinghuysen wrote to New York to have the articles of faith printed in English because there are people here who call themselves Mennists^{16a} who would like to have our articles translated into English. But they asked so much that our congregation could not raise it. . . ." The appeal met with success. In 1712 a forty-page booklet appeared in Amsterdam, *The Christian Confession Of the Faith of the harmless¹⁷ Christians, in the Netherlands, known by the name of Mennonists*. The edition was probably small and in 1727 Andrew Bradford of Philadelphia reprinted the Confession. An appendix was added to the 1727 edition and a comparison of the title page of Part II with page 44 (of Part II) seems to indicate that the Pennsylvania Mennonite ministers had held a conference in 1725 at which time they subscribed to the Dortrecht Confession of Faith.

The second title page reads, "An Appendix To the Confession of Faith of the Christians, called Mennonists, Giving a short & full Account

¹⁶ The data of this section is based on the article, "A Brief Summary of American Mennonite Literature," by H. S. Bender, found in the *Christian Monitor*, Scottsdale, Pa., February, 1928; and on Dr. Bender's book, *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature*, The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, 1929.

^{16a} The identity of the "Mennists" is obscure, but they may have been Anglicized descendants of Dutch Mennonites who as individuals had come to New Amsterdam, New York, years before.

¹⁷ Nonresistant.

of them; because of the Imagination of the newness of our Religion, the Weapon & Revengeless Christendom, and its being. Published Formerly in the Low-Dutch, & translated out of the same into High-Dutch, & out of that into the English Language, 1725." Page 44 states, "We the hereunder written Servants of the Word of God, and Elders in the Congregation of the People called, MENNONISTS, in the Province of PENNSYLVANIA, do acknowledge, and herewith make known, That we do own the afore-going CONFESSION, APPENDIX, and MENNO'S Excusation, to be according to our Opinion; and also, have took the same to be

The
Christian
CONFESSION
 Of the Faith of the harmless
Christians, in the Ne-
therlands, known by
 the name of
M E N N O N I S T S.



A M S T E R D A M.
 Printed, and Re-printed and Sold by
Andrew Bradford in *Philadelph:a*,
 in the Year, 1727.

Courtesy of The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Ind.

Exact Facsimile of the Title Page of the First American Mennonite Imprint, Reproduced from the Copy in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

wholly ours. In Testimony whereof, and that we believe the same to be good, we have here unto Subscribed our Names."

Shipack

Jacob Gaedtschalck,
Henry Kolb
Martin Kolb,
Claes Jansen,
Michael Zigeler.

Germantown

John Gorgas,
John Conerads,
Claes Rittinghausen.

Canastoge

Hans Burgholtzer,
Christian Heer,
Benedict Hirchi,
Martin Bear,
Johannes Bowman,

Great-Swamp

Velte Clemer

Manatant

Daniel Langenecker,
Jacob Beghtly,

FINIS¹⁸

The Mennonite ministers made the following appeal "To the Christian Reader," "We lovingly desire thee, not to look so much on the meanness of the Wording of this little Book; because we are of Dutch Extraction, and therefore willingly will own, that we are not exquisite in the English Language; but to look on the Grounds and Truths therein: And also kindly desire thee to Read the same without Partiality; and consider the Exhortation of the Apostle Paul, I Thes. 5. 21. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." One cannot resist a conjecture that Jacob Godshalk wrote that!

This Confession was reprinted at Niagara, Ontario, in 1808; at New Market, Virginia, in 1810; at Doylestown, Pa., in 1814; at Skippackville, Pa., in 1836; and many times since.

Before mentioning the few Franconia Mennonite authors, other publication ventures deserve attention. On May 8, 1742 the Pennsylvania Mennonites wrote to their brethren in Holland telling them of their numerical growth in the new world, of a vain appeal to the Assembly for military exemption and their fear of an imminent war (the French and Indian War

¹⁸ Copies of both the 1712 and 1727 Confessions are in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia.

was fought, 1754-1763). Failing to receive an answer from the slow Dutchmen they wrote again on October 19, 1745. In this second letter they rehearsed the contents of their 1742 letter and in their fear of militarism even went so far as to say, "We recognize the fact that we have made a mistake in coming to this far-off country with insufficient assurance in the matter of freedom of conscience." And ". . . Since according to appearances the flames of war are mounting higher, and it cannot be known whether the cross and persecution may not come upon the defenceless Christians, it becomes us to strengthen ourselves for such circumstances with patience and endurance, and to make every preparation for steadfast constancy in our faith. It was, therefore, unanimously considered good in this community, if it could be done, to have the *Bloedig Toneel* of Dielman and Van Braght translated into the German language, especially since in our communities in this country there has been a great increase of young men who have grown up. In this book posterity can see the traces of those faithful witnesses who have walked in the way of truth and given up their lives for it. . . ." They further explained that American paper is of poor quality and that no American Mennonite was capable of making an accurate translation from the German to Dutch. What would the cost of translation be? Would there be customs charges when the books were sent to America? What would the cost be with, or without, copper plates? Would it be more advisable to send the books in parcels or all at once? What would be the cost of printing and binding a thousand copies? The Skippack brethren urged all haste in the matter. The letter was sent in the name of all the brethren, ministers and deacons of the non-resistant Mennonite congregations in Pennsylvania. It was signed by Jacot Godshalk, Martin Kolb, Michael Ziegler, Yellis Kassel, Dielman Kolb, and Henry Funk. "The subscribed names of the ministers of the congregation in Schiebach [Skippack] are by the other congregations here ordered to send this to you, Dearly Beloved."¹⁹

The Dutch waited over two years to reply to this (second) letter! "They then threw cold water on the whole enterprise." It would be difficult to find a reliable translator and the whole project would cost too much! They then proposed quite an ingenious money-saving method. Let some of the brethren who know Dutch translate the chief histories of the confessions of the martyrs and let the young people copy these translations in long-hand!²⁰ But this clever suggestion came too late. The Pennsylvania Mennonites had already found a printer and minister in the group of mystical Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Pa.

We shall let the Ephrata chronicler tell the story of the printing. First it should be mentioned that the flour mill of the Ephrata cloister burned down on September 5, 1747. "Shortly before the mill burnt down the Mennonites in Pennsylvania agreed that their great Book of Martyrs,

¹⁹ The 1745 letter is published in the *1910 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 25-27. See also S. W. Pennypacker, *Historical and Biographical Sketches*, Philadelphia, 1883, pp. 157-173.

²⁰ The Schwenkfelders actually did copy many books in longhand.

which was printed in the Dutch language, should be translated and printed in German. No one in the whole country was considered better able to do this than the Brotherhood in Ephrata, especially since they possessed a new printing press and a paper-mill, and moreover were able to put a sufficient number of hands to work. The contract was very advantageous for the above-mentioned Mennonites, for it was agreed on both sides that the Brethren should translate and print the book, but the Mennonites should afterwards have liberty to buy or not to buy. [Then follows an account of the fire at the cloister mill and the rebuilding of the mill.]

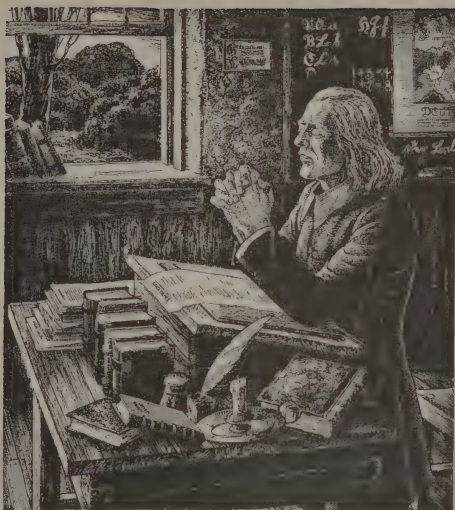
"After the building of the mill was completed, the printing of the Book of Martyrs was taken in hand, to which important work fifteen Brethren were detailed, nine of whom had their work assigned in the printing department, namely, one corrector, who was at the same time the translator, four compositors and four pressmen; the rest had their work in the paper-mill. Three years were spent on this book, though not continuously, for there was often a want of paper. And because at that time, there was little other business in the Settlement, the household of the Brethren got deeply into debt, which, however, was soon liquidated by the heavy sales of the book. The book was printed in large folio form, contained sixteen reams of paper, and the edition consisted of 1300 copies. At a council with the Mennonites, the price of one copy was fixed at twenty shillings, which ought to be proof, that other causes than eagerness for gain led to the printing of the same."²¹

Of this 1748-49 *Martyrs' Mirror* Pennypacker wrote, "The greater part of the literary work upon it was done by the learned prior, Peter Miller, who later, at the request of Congress, according to Watson the amalist, translated the Declaration of Independence into seven different European Languages. The publication of the first part was completed in 1748, and the second in 1749 It is a massive folio of [almost] fifteen hundred . . . pages, printed upon strong thick paper, in large type, in order, as is said in the preface, 'that it may suit the eyes of all.' The binding is solid and ponderous, consisting of boards covered with leather with mountings of brass on the corners, and two brass clasps. The back is further protected by strips of leather studded with brass nails. Some of the copies when they were issued were illustrated with a frontispiece engraved upon copper The plate referred to represented John the Baptist immersing Christ in the river Jordan and consequently the Mennonites refused to have it bound in the copies which they purchased There was another plate prepared for the book but . . . there is but a single known print from it."²²

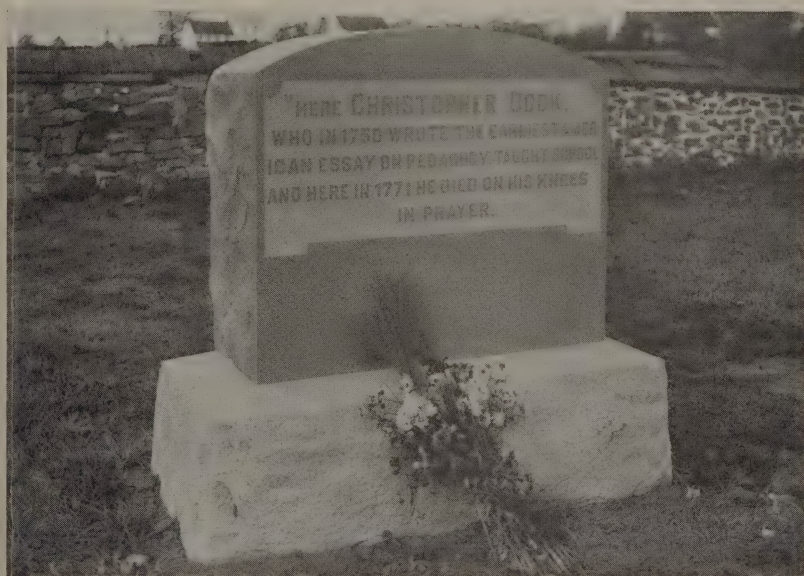
As the Skippack brethren took the lead in writing to Holland so they also kept in constant touch with the printing at Ephrata. Bishop "Harich Funck" and Preacher "Tielmann Kolb" inserted the following certificate

²¹ *Chronicon Ephratense; A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster County, Penn'a.*, by Lamech and Agrippa. Translated From the Original German by J. Max Hark, D.D., Lancaster, Pa., 1889, pp. 209-14.

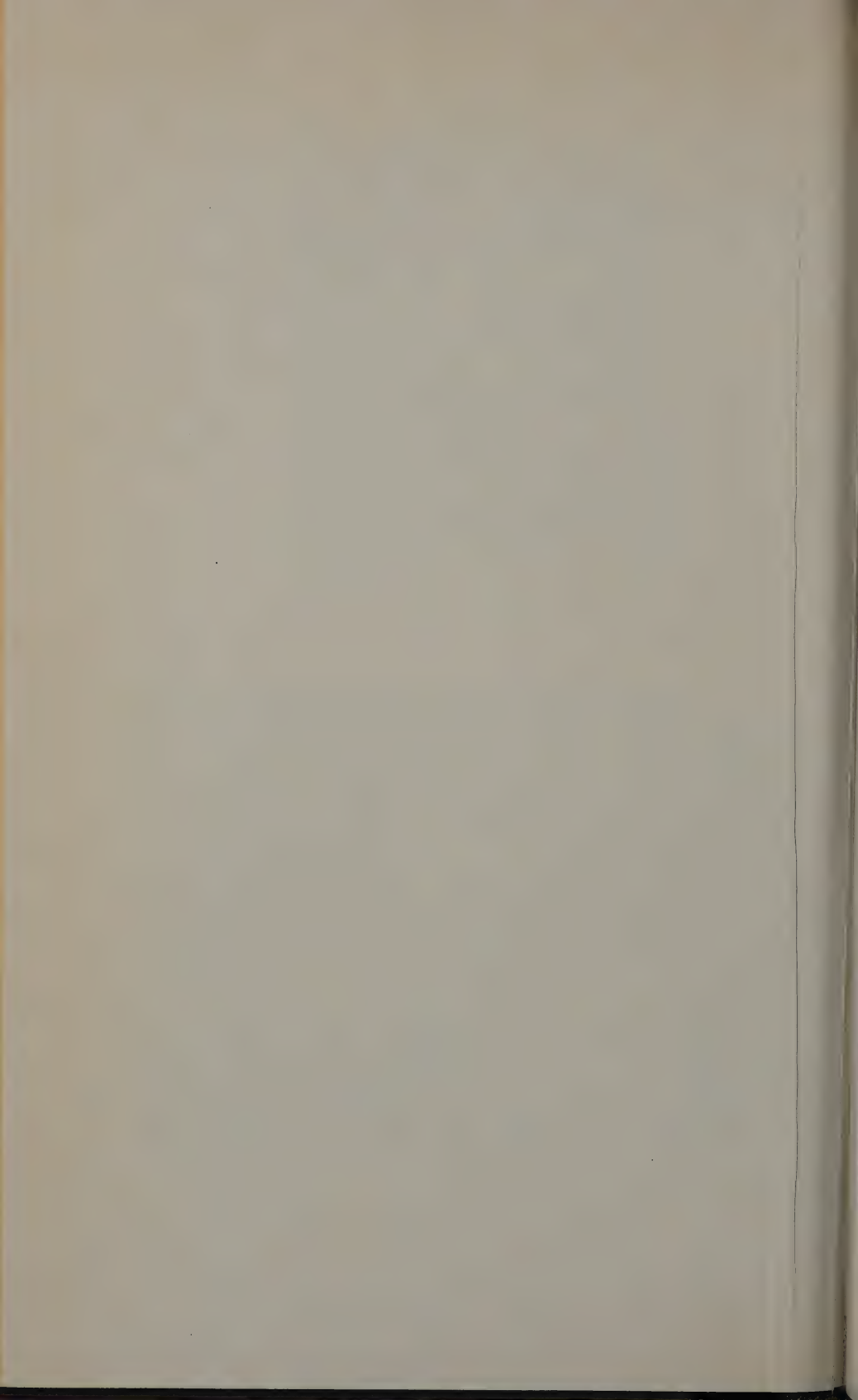
²² Pennypacker, S. W., *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 167.

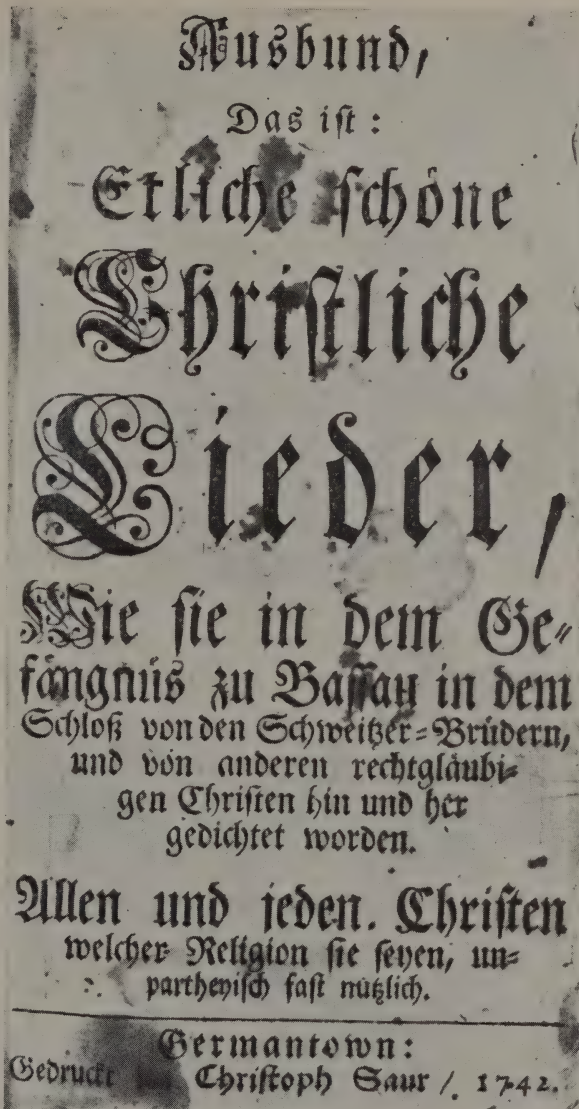


Courtesy of the Mennonite Publishing House
 Christopher Dock; A Conception by
 Oliver W. Shenk, 1933



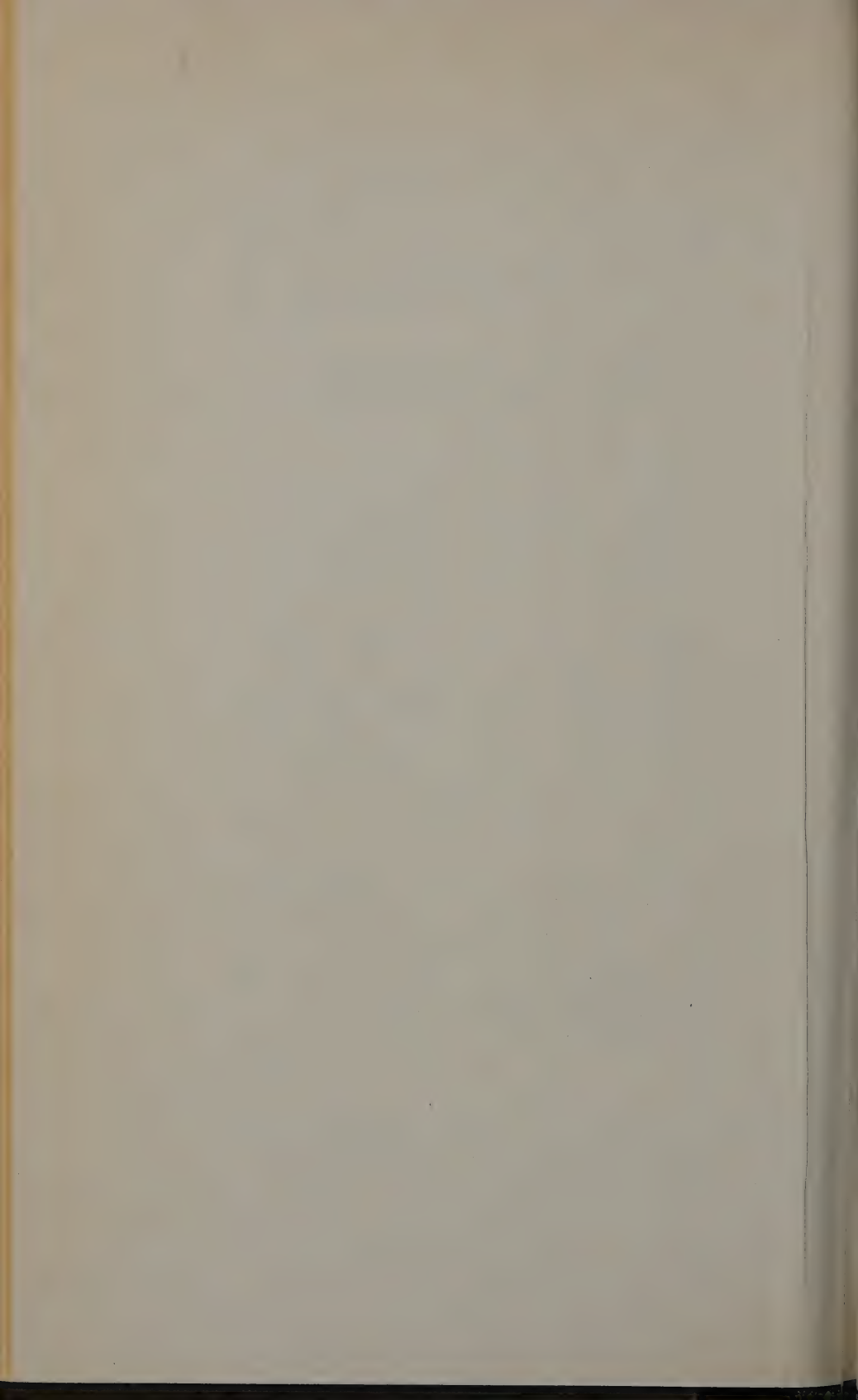
Courtesy of Kolb-Kulp-Culp Family
 Monument to Christopher Dock in the Lower Skippack Burying Ground

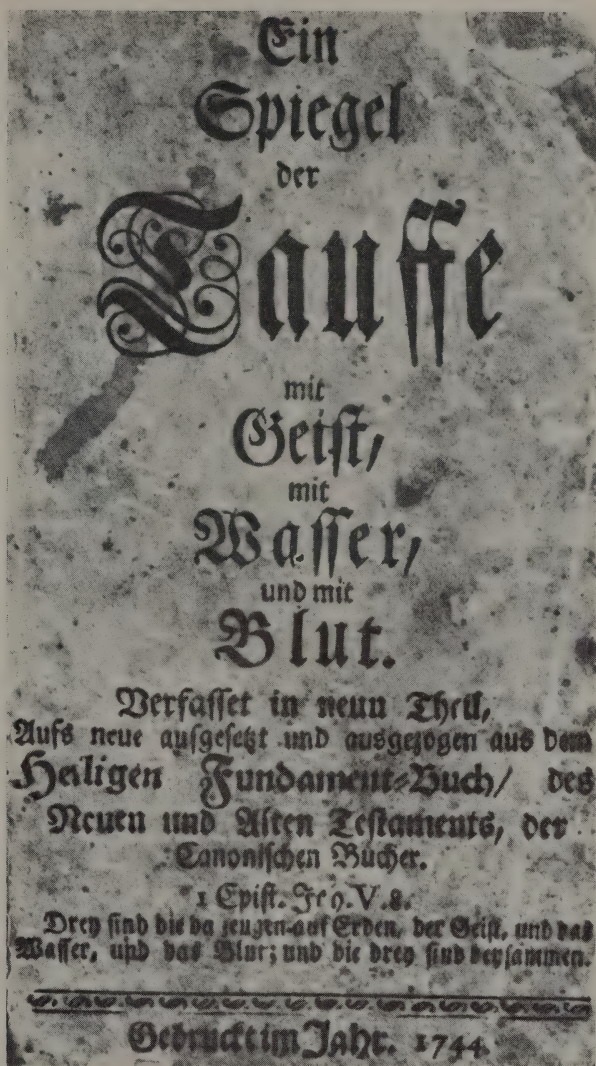




Courtesy of The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College,
Goshen, Ind.

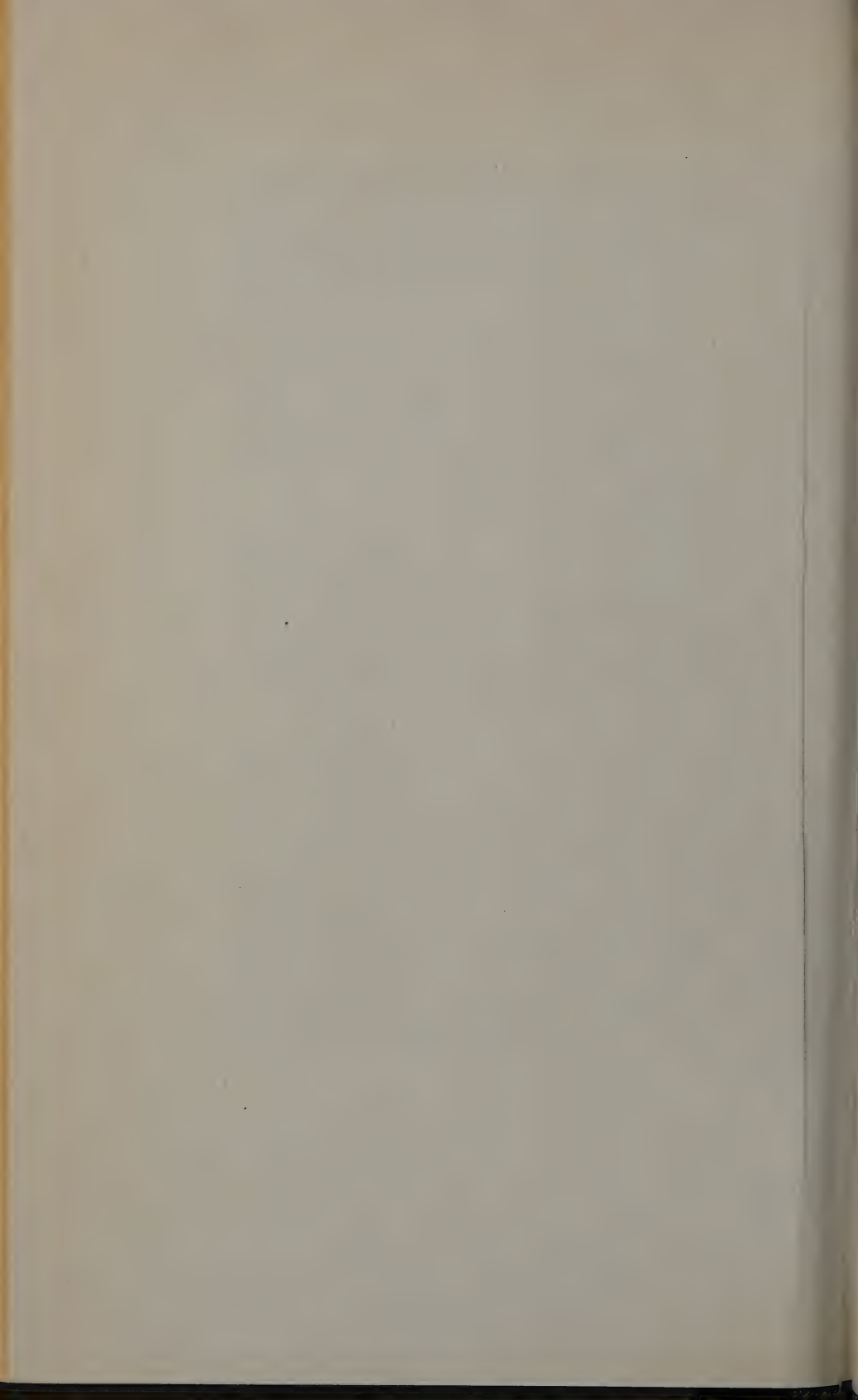
Exact Facsimile of the Title Page of the First American Edition of the *Ausbund*
Oldest Mennonite Hymnal. Reproduced from the Copy in the
Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania





Courtesy of The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

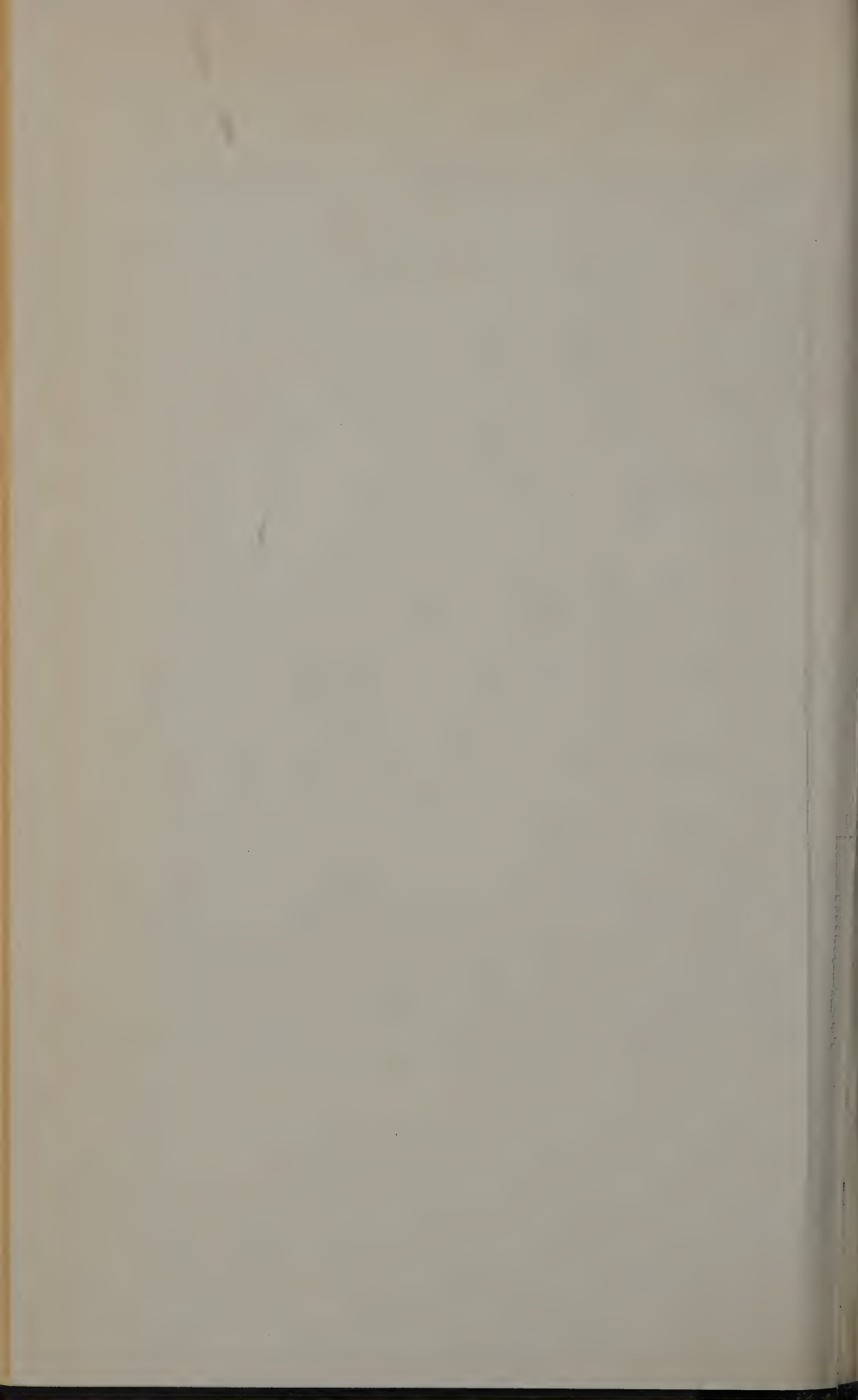
Exact Facsimile of the Title Page of the First Edition of Henrich Funck's *Mirror of Baptism*, Reproduced from the Unique Perfect Copy in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania





Courtesy of Kolb-Kulp-Culp Family

Hand Press on Which the 1748-49 *Martyrs' Mirror* Was Printed; Now in
the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia



Der
Blutige Schau-Platz
oder



Spiegel der Tauffs-Besüiten
oder
Wehrlosen-Schriften,

Die um des Zeugnuß Jesu ihres Seligmachers willen
gelitten haben, und seynd getödtet worden, von Christi Zeit an
bis auf das Jahr 1660.

Vormals aus unterschiedlichen glaubwürdigen Chroniken, Nachrichten und Zeugnußsen gesam-
let und in Holländischer Sprach heraus gegeben

von T. J. V. BRAGHT.

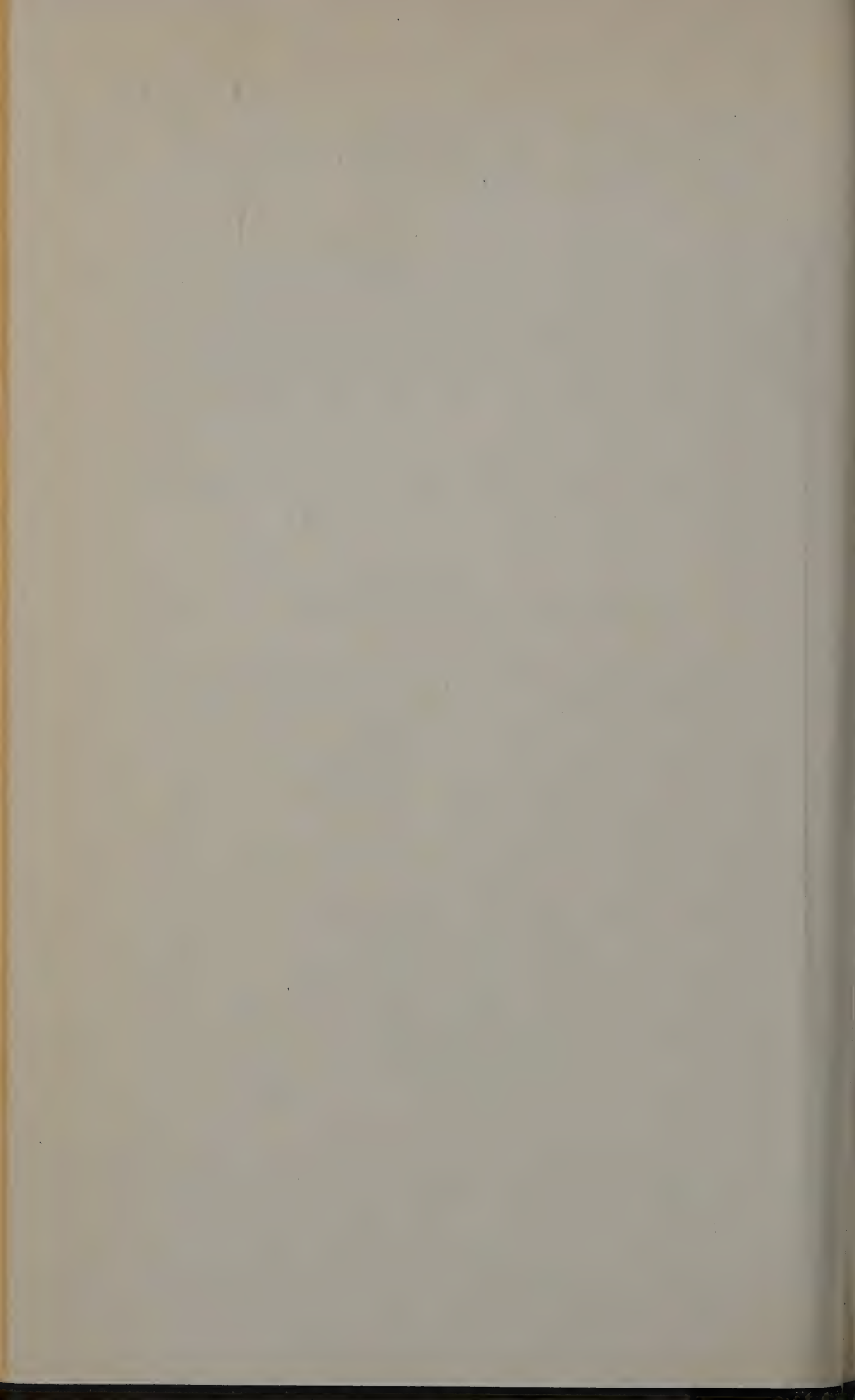
Nun aber sorgfältigst ins Hochteutsche übersezt und zum erstenmal ans Licht gebracht.



EPHRATA in Pensylvanien,
Drucks und Verlags der Bruderschaft. Anno MDCCXLVIII.

Courtesy of The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

Reduced Facsimile of the Title Page of the 1748-49 Edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*
Reproduced from a Copy in the Goshen College Library



Eine
RESTITUTION.

Oder eine

E r f l ä r u n g

einiger Haupt-puncten des Gesetzes:

Wie es durch Christum erfüllet ist, und vollkommen vollendet wird werden an seinem grossen Tage; Nach Inhalt der Heiligen Schrift, des Neuen und Alten Testaments.

Aufgesetzt in 25 Theil
durch

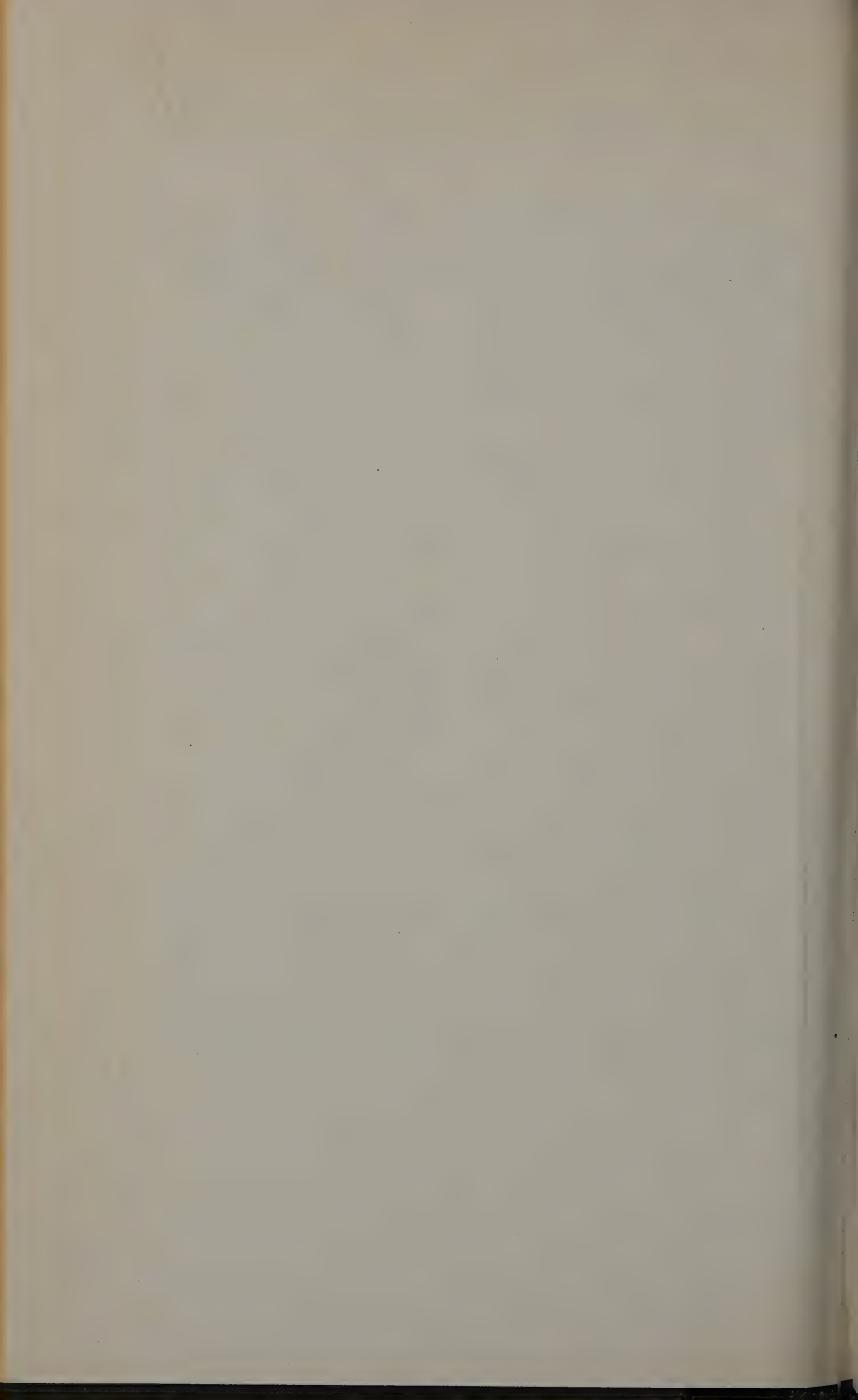
Einen Lehrer des Neuen und Alten Testaments, in der Gemein der Gläubigen in Jesum Christum: die man mit dem Bey-namen nennet die Wieder-täufer oder Menonisten.

H e n r i c h F u n c k.

Ich preisse dich Vatter und Herr Himmels und der Erden, daß du solches den Weisen und Klugen hast verborgen, und hast es den Unmündigen offenbahret. Ja Vatter denn es ist also wohlgefallig gewesen vor dir, Matth. 13 Cap. v. 25, 26.

Verlegt und zum Druck befördert durch die von Henrich Funck hinterlassenen Kindern.

P H I L A D E L P H I A
Gedruckt bey Anton Dembrüster in Moravien Aug. 1763



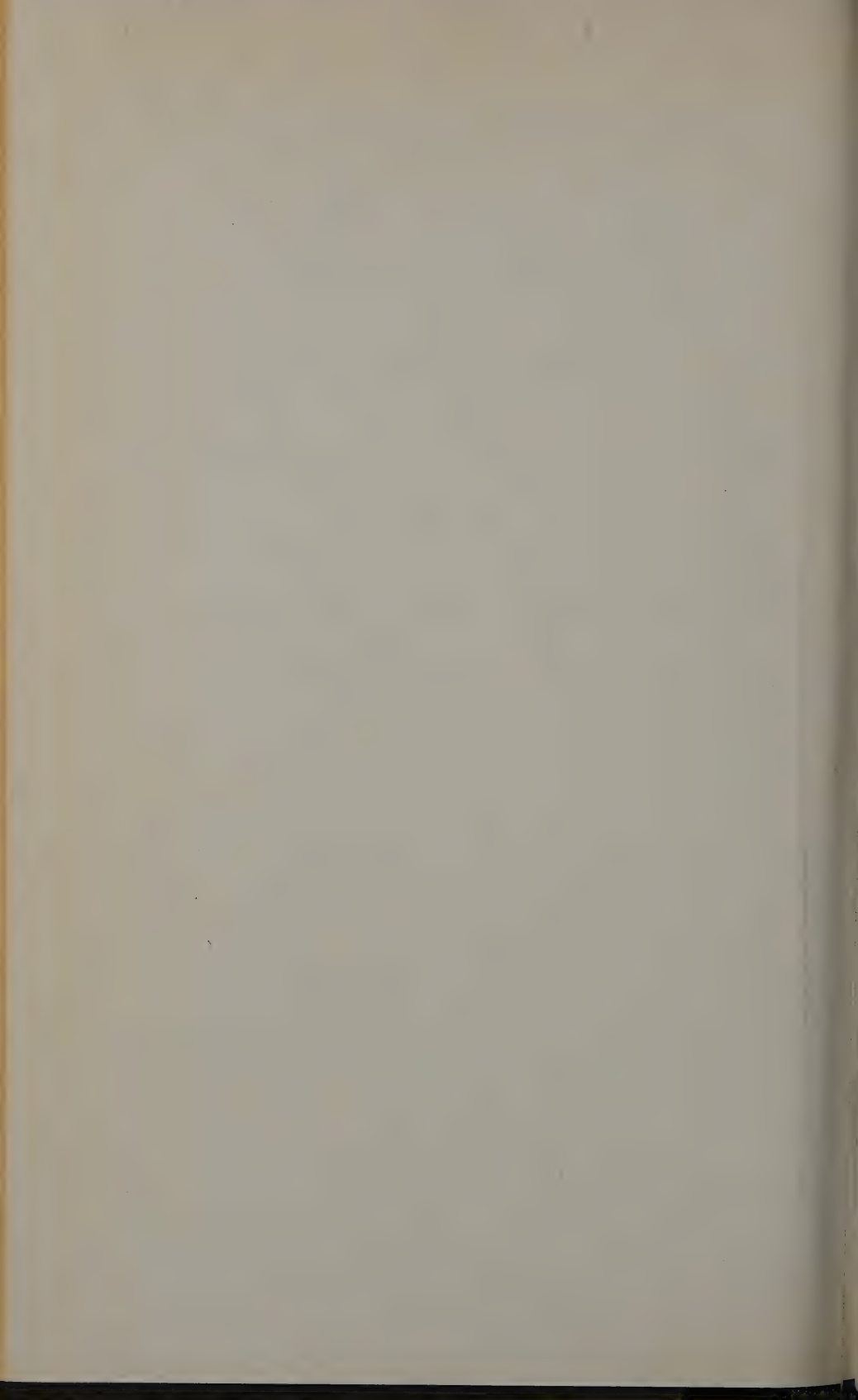
Die
Kleine geistliche
H a r f e
der
Kinder Zion's,
oder auserlesene
geistreiche Gesänge,
allen wahren beilsabegierigen
Säuglingen der Weisheit,
insonderheit aber allen
Christlichen Gemeinden des Herrn
zum Dienst und Gebrauch
mit Fleiß zusammen getragen, und in gegenwärtiger Form und
Ordnung gestellt;
nebst einem
dreyfachen Register.

Erste Auflage.

Auf Verordnung der Mennonisten Gemeinden.

G e r m a n t a u n :
Gedruckt bey Michael Willmeyer, im Jahr 1803.

Slightly Reduced Facsimile of the Title Page of the First Edition of the
Franconia Conference Hymnal,—the First American
Mennonite Hymnal, *Zion's Harp*



Eine Beschreibung
der
Neuen Creatur.

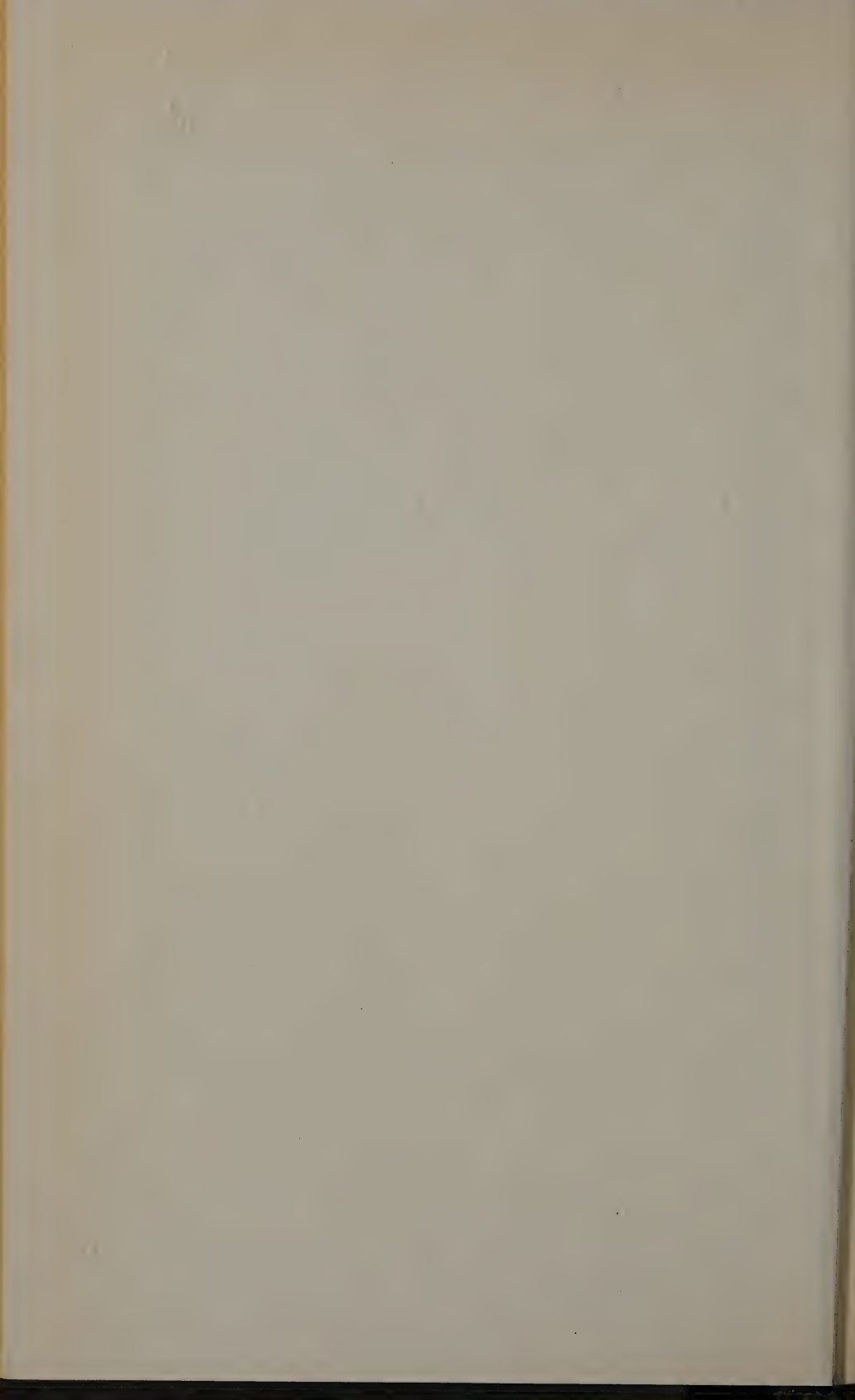
Von der Geburt an, bis in das vollkommene
Alter in **CHRISTU** **IESU**, sammt des-
sen Nothwendigkeit, Ursprung, Wachs-
thum, und endlich, glückseligen
Zustand durch **IESUM**
CHRISTUM.

Geschrieben von
Abraham Gottschall,
Prediger der Menonisten Gemeinde, zu
Doylestaun.

„Prüfet aber Alles, und das Beste behaltet.“

Gedruckt, und zu haben in der Druckerei von J.
Tung, zu Doylestaun.

.....
1838.



(translated from the German by Pennypacker²³) at the end of the book, "It was desired by very many in Pennsylvania that there should be a German translation and edition of the martyr book of the Defenceless Christians or *Taufts-Gesinnnten*,²⁴ before printed in the Dutch language, and the Brotherhood in Ephrata, at Conestoga, offered and promised not only that they would translate the book, but would take care that it should be of a neat print and a good paper and at their own cost, if we would promise to buy the copies and have none printed or brought here from any other place. Thereupon the elders and ministers (*Vorsteher und Diener*) of the church of the *Taufts-Gesinnnten*, which are called Mennonites (to which church the said book is best adapted), went to Ephrata and made there with their said friends an agreement that they, the said *Taufts-Gesinnnten*, would buy the said books at a reasonable price, and would not give orders elsewhere, provided they should receive assurance of good work, paper and translation, but if the print should not turn out well they should be released. Henrich Funck and Tielmann Kolb had such a great love for this book that they both with common consent gave their time and labor to it, and, as the leaves came from the press and were sent to them in order, went over them one at a time, comparing them with the Dutch,²⁵ and in this work have not omitted a single verse. They have not found in the whole book one line which does not give the same grounds of belief and sense as is contained in the Dutch. They have indeed found a number of words about which they have hesitated and doubted, and which might have been improved both in the Dutch and German, but it is not to be wondered at that in so large a book a word here and there is not used in the best sense; but nobody ought to complain for this reason, for we are all human and often err.

"Concerning the Errata placed before the Register, it has been found that many that were in the Dutch edition have been corrected, though not all, and some have been found in the German, although, as has been said, they are not numerous.

"We have, therefore, at the request of the rest of our fellow-ministers, very willingly read through this great book from the beginning to the end, and compared it with the Dutch, and we have according to our slight ability and gift of understanding found nothing that would be disadvantageous to this book, or in which the teachings of the holy martyrs have not been properly translated, but we believe that the translator has done his best, with the exception of the typographical errors, of which in our opinion there are few for such a great book. But should some one go through it as we have done, and find some mistakes which we have overlooked or not understood, it

²³ Minor corrections by the present author.

²⁴ The Swiss and South German Mennonites were called by this name. In Holland the Mennonites are called "Doopsgezinden."

²⁵ John D. Souder has a Dutch *Martyrs' Mirror* which has been handed down among the ministry for many generations. The book was given to him by Deacon Jacob A. Freed (1851-1929). Freed claimed it was the Dutch copy used by Henry Funk and Dielman Kolb in checking the accuracy of the German version. The Dutch copy now in the possession of Brother Souder is in poor condition; the binding is ruined and the pages disarranged.

would be well for him to call attention to them, because two or three witnesses are better than one.

"We further believe that the best thing about this book will be that the Lord through his Holy Spirit will so kindle the hearts of men with an eager desire for it that they will not regard a little money but buy it, and take plenty of time, read in it earnestly with thought, so that they may see and learn in what way they should be grounded in belief in Christ, and how they should arrange their lives and walk, in order to follow the defenceless Lamb and to be heirs of the everlasting Kingdom with Christ and His Apostles. In this book are contained many beautiful teachings out of both the Old and New Testament, accompanied with many examples of true followers, from which it is apparent *that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.* Acts XIV, 22. We see in it many true predecessors who have followed the Lamb, of whom Paul says, Hebrews XIII, 7: *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* Although the road is small and narrow, nevertheless it leads to everlasting joy."²⁶

During the Revolutionary War there was a great scarcity of paper. Upon hearing that there was a great supply of printed paper at Ephrata six soldiers came with two wagons and hauled off the remaining unbound martyr books and probably used the paper as wadding. "This gave great offence in the country, and many thought that the war would not end favorably for the country, because the memorials of the holy martyrs had been thus maltreated; at last, however, they were honored again, for some sensible persons bought in all that were left of them."²⁷

This Ephrata reprint was "the largest book printed in the American Colonies before the Revolution." Its history covered over sixteen centuries! The book really is the compilation of many authors. *Het Offer des Herrn* appeared in Holland in 1564, and in turn was based on an earlier work. *Het Offer* recounted the executions and confessions of Dutch Mennonite martyrs from 1524-1564. In 1660 appeared T. J. Van Braght's *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaars-Spiegel*, which was based in part on *Het Offer*. But Van Braght started with Jesus and traced out the history of martyrs through every century to his own. Included among the martyrs of Van Braght's *Martyrs' Mirror* are Manichaeans, Waldenses, Albigensians, etc.,—many of whom held doctrines strongly repudiated by Mennonites. But the author sought to establish the fact that believers' baptism and nonresistance had been maintained by persecuted sects since the Apostolic Age.

The German *Martyrs' Mirror* was reprinted at Pirmasens, Germany, in 1780; Lancaster, Pa., 1814; Philadelphia, 1849; Elkhart, Indiana, 1870; Scottdale, Pa., 1916. It was printed in English, near Lampeter Square, Lancaster County, in 1837; and at Elkhart, Indiana, (directly from the original Dutch of 1660) in 1886.

²⁶ Pennypacker, *op. cit.*, pp. 169, 170.

²⁷ Footnote on page 214, *Chronicon Ephratense*.

One other publication venture of two Franconia laymen, John Herstein and John Schmutz, should be mentioned. Among the earlier Mennonite ministers at Altona, Germany, was Jacob Denner (1659-1746), author of a book of sermons. His *Betrachtungen* were first published in 1730. In 1792 Herstein and Schmutz arranged for the publication of a reprint of Denner's book at Frankenthal am Rhein, Germany. Their edition consisted of five hundred books. According to tradition Herstein and Schmutz went over to Germany and brought their 500 books of Denner's sermons to America. They also brought 500 Basel Bibles. "They divided the books between them each taking 250 copies of the Bible and 250 copies of the sermons and started out to sell them Herstein visited the brethren in Montgomery and Bucks counties and quickly disposed of his lot. Schmutz visited Lancaster county and after a fruitless effort to sell the books he returned home very much disgusted and still having nearly all of his books, remarking as he met Herstein, 'If you want to sell anything in Lancaster county, you must bring them a drove of oxen; they sell better than Bibles.'"^{27a} Denner's sermons were reprinted at Philadelphia in 1860. An ambitious attempt by Joseph B. Steiner, a Mennonite of Doylestown, Pa., in 1901 to publish an English edition of Denner's sermons failed for lack of support.

Dr. Bender says, ". . . No literature of any sort was produced in Lancaster County or in Virginia, or in any other part of the church outside of Franconia, before 1800. Furthermore, it should be noted that the only writing done was by European born and educated Mennonites who migrated to this country. Lastly, note that all of this literature was written before the Revolutionary War, and that none of it was reprinted until 1834."

The most important American Mennonite author prior to the Civil War was Bishop Henry Funk (d. 1760) of Franconia township, now Montgomery county. In 1744 he published a 94-page book, *Ein Spiegel Der Tauffe mit Geist mit Wasser und mit Blut*. His treatise on baptism defended, of course, baptism by affusion. Oddly enough, he went to Christopher Saur a Dunkard printer,^{27b} to get his book published. Saur printed it but left his name off the title page! "The discussion is thoroughly scriptural and practical and became very popular." It passed through at least five German editions, 1744, 1834, 1850, 1853, and 1861; and two English editions, 1851 and 1890.

After Bishop Funk's death his children published a treatise written by their father, *Eine Restitution, Oder eine Erklarung einiger Hauptpuncten des Gesetzes*. The book, of twenty-five chapters, is an exposition of how the Law "has been fulfilled by Christ, and will reach its Perfect Consummation in His Great Day." It was the largest book of any sort written by a Men-

^{27a} 1906 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 18.

^{27b} Twelve Franconia Conference meetinghouses still have copies of the famous Saur Bibles on the pulpits: Salford, Lexington, and Deep Run have copies of the 1743 edition; Skippack, Doylestown, and Plain have copies of the 1763 edition; and Franconia, Rockhill, Blooming Glen, Hereford, Boyertown, and Coventry have copies of the 1776 edition. The Worcester Saur Bible of 1763 is in the Goshen College Library.

nonite author during the first two hundred years of American Mennonite life. It was also the first American Mennonite book to be reprinted in Europe. It was reprinted at Biel, Switzerland, in 1844 and at Lancaster, Pa., in 1862. In 1915 an English edition was published at Elkhart, Indiana.

Christopher Dock's writings were discussed in Part IV, Chapter I.

Several broadsides ought to be mentioned. In 1775 the Pennsylvania Mennonites and Dunkards united in sending a petition to the Assembly, *A Short and Sincere Declaration, To Our Honorable Assembly* . . . (See Part VI). The Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, possesses a broadside written by a very old Chester county minister, *An die Mennonisten, Taeufer, Amischen und alle andere Freunde des Friedens*. It is an address to the Mennonites, Amish, and other nonresistants to vote for the right type of statesmen and to elect peace-loving legislators. It is dated September 25, 1812. The author is unknown. He may not have been a Mennonite. It is simply signed, "Ein Prediger," —a minister. In 1852 a broadside appeared, *Abschiedsworte Des Ehr. Johannes Geil an Seine Gemeinde*,—the "Farewell Words of Rev. John Geil to His Church." (John F. Funk's translation is found in Part VI.)

On July 1, 1836 Henry Bertolet, a Skippack Mennonite preacher, started a monthly periodical of 16 pages, *Der Evangelische Botschafter*. The subscription price was a dollar per year. Only one issue appeared. But a later son of Franconia, John F. Funk, started a church periodical which opposition did not crush.

In 1837 Abraham Gottschall, a Doylestown minister, wrote a 16-page booklet, *Wahrer Gerechtigkeit* . . . , (*True Righteousness*) published at Doylestown.

In 1838 the same man, spelling his name in English Abraham Godshalk, wrote *A Description of the New Creature*, which he also published at Doylestown, and in both German and English. It is a book of 76 pages (in English) and treats of "the new birth and its results in the Christian's life." It is a fine little book. It was probably written to fortify the Mennonites against the proselyting activities of the Evangelical Association which won its converts by teaching the necessity of highly emotional conversions.

Preacher Samuel Godshalk of Deep Run wrote, *Encouragement to Early Piety* . . . , upon the death of his son, Henry, who died May 15, 1879 while on a trip to Kansas. The 48-page booklet was published at Elkhart, Indiana in 1880. The greater part of the book is composed of hymns.

In 1886 John D. Souder, then a youth of twenty-one, wrote a series of articles for a local newspaper *Weekly News*, Harleysville, Pa., *History of Franconia Township*, which were subsequently published in book form. Brother Souder's interest in history has led to the writing of the present book.

Jacob B. Mensch records in his conference minutes that at the May 5, 1887 conference the fact was discussed that almost all denominations were then sending out missionaries to make known their faith. Therefore it had been considered advisable by many people to also spread our nonresistant faith through public periodicals, namely, *Der Herold der Wahrheit* (Chi-

cago, Ill., 1864-); *Mennonitische Rundschau* (Elkhart, Ind. 1880-); *Das Himmelsmanna* (Milford Square, Pa., 1876-); *The Watchful Pilgrim* (Dale Enterprise, Va., 1880-); and *Die Kirche Unterm Kreuz* (Quakertown, Pa., 1885-).^{27c} It was realized that these periodicals would be sent out far and wide where there were no Mennonite preachers. Therefore conference decided that whoever desires to support the above-named periodicals should have the privilege to do so. One must admire the spirit of this action.

Several decades ago William Gross of Fountainville, Pennsylvania, wrote a 29-page apologetic for the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, etc., *Some Thoughts Concerning the Teaching of the Holy Scriptures*. He also wrote and published a considerable amount of poetry in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

A number of Franconia Mennonites have compiled songbooks or singing-school books. Preacher John Krupp of Plain had a brother, Abraham, who was also probably a Mennonite. A local historian wrote the following rather interesting description of him: "Abraham Krupp was a teacher of music, and the author of several musical works, namely: *The New and Much Improved Musical Teacher*, and *A choice Selection of Hymns*. Aside from his musical talent he was an excentric [sic] person. Old people remember of his infatuation for flying, and like Darius Green, he also invented a flying machine. He lived near Fairview, this county [Montgomery], in the vicinity of the old Presbyterian church when he made the experiment. He was, however, unsuccessful in his aeronatic [sic] expedition from the hogstable roof, and instead of ascending, descended safely to terra firma."²⁸

In 1844 S. M. Musselman of Lower Salford township, Montgomery county, published a songbook of 160 pages, *Die Neue Choral Harmonie* . . . , Harrisburg, Pa.

A much larger book was compiled by Samuel K. Cassel, *Der Christliche Saenger* . . . , published at Skippackville, Pa., in 1855. The book had 440 pages. The title page gives the address of Cassel as Upper Salford township, but at a later date Cassel was a member of the Blooming Glen Mennonite congregation. Under date of May 9, 1879 Cassel wrote a letter to Preacher Jacob B. Mensch of Skippack saying that he was going to send him two dozen books to sell. Mensch was to return the unsold copies to Cassel (at Blooming Glen). As early as 1861 Cassel was a school director in Hilltown township. (Teachers were then paid \$24 a month.) Cassel was also a trustee of the Blooming Glen Mennonite Church.

In 1872 J. C. Allebach and I. R. Hunsberger published an English songbook, *Readable Notes for the Sunday School* . . . , at Philadelphia. This book of 159 pages was of odd dimensions, the pages measuring

^{27c} *Das Himmelsmanna* and *Die Kirche Unterm Kreuz* were both published by General Conference Mennonites.

²⁸ James Y. Heckler, *History of Lower Salford Township* . . . , Harleysville, Pa., 1888, p. 9.

about 5x7 inches. Allebach^{28a} was a member of the Plain Mennonite congregation. Hunsberger was of Dunkard parentage. His own religious affiliation is unknown to the author. In the same year when they issued *Readable Notes*, Allebach and Hunsberger published a much larger singing school book, *The Temple Harp* . . . , Philadelphia, 1872.^{28b}

The last songbook published by a Franconia Mennonite was *Christliche Lieder*, compiled by a Deep Run Mennonite, Abraham A. Meyer (d. May 16, 1877), published by the family of the deceased Meyer, and printed by J. G. Stauffer of Milford Square, Pa., in 1877. The book has 111 pages.

Not worthy of mention, but a Franconia Mennonite production, was a paper booklet (or several booklets) of 31 pages by an eccentric Blooming Glen Mennonite, Henry C. Moyer, W. M.²⁹ His treatise was on *International Peace* and was published in 1901.

One must marvel at the dearth of literature produced by American Mennonites. Though Franconia did stand first in literary activity in the eighteenth century, yet through the entire history of the district only three books have made any appreciable contribution to Mennonite religious literature, Funk's *Mirror of Baptism*, and his *Restitution Or An Explanation of Several Principal Points of the Law*; and Godshalk's *A Description of the New Creature*. Mennonitism has been perpetuated chiefly through home training and the teaching of the ministry and only incidentally by the reading of Mennonite books. Perhaps the church could better meet the various sectarian and nonsectarian attacks of today if it had been more literary in the past.

^{28a} Mrs. William Souder of the Rockhill congregation received musical instruction on an *Estey* organ (which she also purchased of Allebach) from Allebach.

^{28b} This song book made large claims for itself. The title page is as follows: *The Temple Harp: Being A Very Choice Collection Of Sacred Music, Comprising The Most Popular Psalm And Hymn Tunes, Anthems, &c., Ever Issued From The Press; In J. B. Aiken's Seven Figured Or Character Notes. Including A New And Thorough Course Of Instruction In The Elementary Principles Of Musical Science. Designed For The Use Of Choirs, Singing Schools And Singing Societies.* By J. C. Allebach And I. R. Hunsberger. Philadelphia; S. C. Collins, Publisher, 705 Jayne Street. [1872].

²⁹ W. M. probably means watchmaker. (He was commonly called "Watchmaker Henry.") Part of his life he was *non compos mentis*.

Chapter III

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Prior to about 1870 there were no church activities of any kind in the Franconia Conference.¹ The usual routine consisted of regular church services every two, or sometimes every four weeks, nothing more. The Mennonites were slow in awakening to the necessity of any church activities in addition to the regular Sunday service. But to their credit it may be said that no divisions were caused by the introduction of any new form of church work.^{1a}

Sunday schools, therefore, were not organized at an early date in the Franconia Conference. In many congregations the exact date of organization is lost. But a general statement can be made that most of the Sunday schools of the Franconia Conference were organized in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Just a few were earlier or later. Vincent organized a Sunday school in 1870 but it was discontinued after a few years. A minister of the Franconia congregation started a Saturday Bible school about 1871 or 1872 in a schoolhouse. A few Sunday schools were started at an early date, discontinued, and again organized in the present century. For example the present Deep Run Sunday School was organized in 1904, and the present Hereford-Boyetown Sunday School, in 1913.

In many places it was laymen who organized or supported Sunday schools in schoolhouses. These were very often union organizations. Sometimes Mennonites or Mennonite children united with other denominations because of the influence of union Sunday-school work or as a result of attending other denominational Sunday schools.

Fifteen Sunday schools now assemble in Franconia Conference meetinghouses every Sunday. They are: Blooming Glen, Boyertown-Hereford, Deep Run, Doylestown, Franconia, Lexington, Perkasio, Plain, Providence, Rockhill, Salford, Skippack, Souderton, Towamencin, and Vincent. Swamp and Springfield each meet every two weeks and a Sunday school is conducted at Plumstead every four weeks. Eight mission Sunday schools meet every Sunday; they are: Finland, Gardenville, Lansdale, Norristown, Perkiomenville, Pottstown, Rocky Ridge, and Spring Mount.

The total enrollment of all these twenty-six Sunday schools is about six thousand. About one third of the scholars are less than fourteen years of age. There are approximately three hundred pupils over twelve years

¹ Part II contains the history of the various activities in each congregation in connection with the history of the congregation. Therefore only a brief summary of each field of work will be given in this chapter.

^{1a} J. Clayton Kolb, a minister of Vincent, was removed from office for opposing Sunday schools.

of age who are not church members. More than 750 pupils are of non-Mennonite parentage.²

Eight of the Franconia Sunday schools have teachers' meetings. They are: Blooming Glen, Deep Run, Doylestown, Lexington, Plain, Salford, Souderton, and Towamencin. Daniel J. Lapp of Nebraska was mainly responsible for starting this worth-while activity. In 1897 he helped the Lexington teachers organize a teachers' meeting. Swamp also has a sort of teachers' meeting which is conducted every two weeks on Sunday evening, but the lessons discussed are for the Sundays when the Swamp Sunday School is not conducted. The meeting therefore is simply a group discussion of the Sunday-school lesson,—more or less of a Bible study class.

SINGING SCHOOLS

Mennonites of the Franconia Conference do not employ choirs in their services. They have congregational singing and love it. The testimony of a Lancaster county deacon over a century ago was, the Franconia Conference Mennonites ". . . have a large and strong church, as well as a large district, and are well trained in singing" ³ Part singing, that is, soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, has been introduced within the last seventy-five years. There does not seem to have been as much opposition in the Franconia Conference to the introduction of singing in parts as there was in Lancaster. However as recent a leader as Bishop Samuel Leatherman (1815-1904) regretted the innovation.

Elihu D. Clemmer (b. 1842) reports that when he was a young man he and Abraham Alderfer conducted German singing schools in Franconia and Skippack schoolhouses. He also remembers that Mennonites conducted singing schools in a Schwenkfelder meetinghouse. Mennonites did not usually have singing schools in their own meetinghouses until after the introduction of Sunday schools.

The usual singing school meets weekly in the meetinghouse for three months. Instruction is given in the rudiments of vocal music and sight reading, with sometimes a little instruction in voice and hymn interpretation. But the usual singing school is chiefly a weekly drill in lusty note singing. One is impressed with the musical ability of ordinary Mennonite farmers and tradesmen. The final session is often a public program. If the instructor has conducted a number of singing schools in different meetinghouses, he usually arranges a public program in which all the classes from the various schools unite in giving their final program. Singing schools of this type have served to preserve congregational singing, and have made musical accompaniment unnecessary and unwelcome.

Conference officially approves singing schools because they preserve good congregational singing. In 1921 conference passed a resolution, "that

² The data of this paragraph is based on the statistics given by I. W. Royer in the 1937 *Mennonite Year Book and Directory*.

³ From a letter of Deacon Martin Mellinger to John Weber of Germany, 1821; published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, January, 1931, pp. 56, 57.

we encourage instruction in singing and that the Bishops and ministers be consulted in selecting teachers to give the instruction, so that only faithful Brethren be chosen for this work."

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETINGS

Young people's meetings are not yet well established in the churches of the Franconia Conference, although the Perkasio and Doylestown meetings have been held for over twenty years. Doylestown, Perkasio, and Vincent are the only meetinghouses in which young people's meetings are held. The Norristown Mission has a young people's meeting and at Hereford the young people have a meeting twice a month in private homes. Skippack, Plain, and Lexington have had young people's meetings (Lexington's was not in the meetinghouse) but they have all been discontinued. At Swamp a children's meeting is held every two weeks on Sunday evening.

SEWING CIRCLES

The oldest sewing circle in the conference district is the one at Doylestown. Sewing circle work was started there almost thirty years ago (1908). The World War and the postwar period were the occasion for the organization of a half dozen more circles. And within the last two or three years Salford organized two circles and Towamencin also organized one. There was formerly a Plumstead Sewing Circle, 1919-1925, and a Deep Run circle, 1918-1925.

The present sewing circles in the Franconia Conference churches,⁴ and dates when the work was started are: Blooming Glen-Perkasie, 1915; Doylestown, 1908; Lexington-Plain, 1918; Rockhill, 1919; Salford I, 1934; Salford II, 1935; Towamencin, 1936. The work of these congregational units is supervised by the officers of the Associated Sewing Circles of the district.⁵ The 1936 officers for the Franconia Conference district are Mrs. Rhine Benner, Lansdale, Pa., President; Mrs. John Nyce, Souderton, Pa., Vice President; Mrs. Harry A. Derstine, Souderton, Pa., Secretary.

EVANGELISM; BIBLE INSTRUCTION MEETINGS

Evangelistic meetings are not well established in the Franconia Conference. Prayer meetings are not found at all. These facts are usually the occasion for criticism. But attitudes are not always as blameworthy as critics assert. Mennonites as a group, the author believes, are as devout as the Christians of other evangelical bodies. No doctrinal liberalism is preached from the pulpits of the churches of the Franconia Conference. Mennonites believe in prayer and in conversion and in regeneration. And a wholesome discipline is exercised by the church over its members which many denominations consider rather severe.

⁴ Exclusive of mission stations.

⁵ The Salford and Towamencin circles are not yet directly affiliated with the district organization.

It is not to be denied that some Mennonites are opposed to evangelistic and prayer meetings for unworthy reasons. To some people the fact that an activity is new is sufficient reason to condemn it. May there not be a more reasonable explanation for the attitude of a number of sensible Christians? There is. Certainly some of those who oppose evangelistic and prayer meetings do so because of the emotional excesses which sometimes accompany such services. The prayer meetings of some "holiness groups" are also characterized by excessive emotionalism. Uninformed people are apt to confuse these all-too-prevalent excesses with genuine evangelism and New Testament meetings for worship, exhortation and prayer. Indeed the Mennonite Church itself is perhaps not altogether free from a certain unhealthy type of evangelism.

Mennonites are generally quiet and worshipful in their service as a simple Gospel message is presented by a spiritual and humble minister. The awfulness of sin and the marvel of God's redeeming love are a sufficient message to bring sinners to repentance. To attempt to move people to tears by anything less than this majestic theme is to belittle the Gospel of Christ.

Perhaps the first evangelist to visit the Franconia Conference churches was John S. Coffman who preached at Deep Run, Doylestown, Lexington, and Blooming Glen in 1896. He did not conduct a series of evangelistic meetings but he undoubtedly preached evangelistic sermons. During that same year A. D. Wenger visited the district. As a consequence many young people united with the church. In 1897 D. J. Lapp spent several months in the Franconia Conference district, preaching many evangelistic sermons, but not conducting a series of meetings at any one place. About one hundred young people united with the church, following his visit.

The first Bible instruction meetings in the district were conducted at Doylestown in 1909.⁶ In 1910 Bible instruction meetings were held at Vincent with the full consent of conference. Such meetings gradually took on an evangelistic note at some of the congregations. Bible instruction meetings are now held in all the bishop districts of the conference. Evangelistic meetings have also been conducted regularly in the Deep Run and Skippack bishop districts for a number of years. The first definitely evangelistic meetings in the Franconia bishop district were conducted at the Finland Mission in 1933.

BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

Bible study classes are also a recent development among the Franconia Conference Mennonites. The first congregation to have a systematic Bible study class was Souderton. As early as 1920 a group of young people took a Bible correspondence course from Eastern Mennonite School. These courses were continued each year until about 1924. The groups met in private homes. Then from about 1925 to 1928 a Bible study class met in the Souderton meetinghouse where the ministers of the congregation arranged

⁶ Arrangements for these meetings were made without the consent of Conference. Conference required an acknowledgment of error from the Doylestown ministers for this step but allowed the meetings to be held.

a course of study and served as leaders. During the winter of 1934-35 Paul Mininger conducted classes in Religious Education and Sunday School Teacher Training in a private home in Souderton.

The next congregation to have a Bible study class was Providence. During the winter of 1926-27 Henry Bechtel of the Vincent congregation taught a Bible study class in the Providence meetinghouse.

Bible study classes have met weekly in the Blooming Glen meetinghouse each winter since 1933-34. The ministers, W. R. Moyer and Melvin A. Bishop, and Deacon Norman M. Moyer have served as leaders. The adults, several hundred in number and coming from many congregations, constitute one large class. The children are divided into a number of classes. The Gospel of John, the General Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and Biblical Doctrines have been studied.

Similar classes have been conducted at the Doylestown meetinghouse for a number of years. J. David Nyce is serving as the instructor at present (1936-37).

During the winter of 1935-36 weekly Bible study classes met in the Lexington meetinghouse. J. C. Clemens served as instructor and was assisted by Jacob M. Moyer and Arthur D. Ruth. The course consisted of a series of doctrinal studies. Over one hundred submitted written work for correction. The junior and primary classes, numbering about one hundred twenty, studied the life of Christ.

As this is being written the Plain congregation is having a Bible study class. The course consists of Old Testament History. J. C. Clemens, assisted by John E. Lapp, is teaching the course.

The mission stations practically all have evangelistic meetings and Bible study classes. This is not the case in all the congregations at this time because the apathy of one ordained man in a congregation may prevent a step of any kind. Unity before action, is the rule in the Franconia Conference church pulpits. This may deprive congregations of blessings but it is intended to prevent divisions.

In looking over the church activities of the Franconia Conference one could wish for more activity in some places. And yet more progressive steps in methods of Christian work have been taken in the last generation than in the previous two centuries. One must rejoice at the progress that has been made and pray for continued activity of the type that draws souls to God and strengthens the inner man in Christ.

Note: The Deep Run meetinghouse was equipped with lights after this manuscript was completed. The annual mission meeting (three sessions) will be held at Deep Run on May 4, 1937.

Chapter IV

THE FRANCONIA MENNONITE MISSION BOARD

The Franconia Mission Board¹ dates its existence from the year 1917. In response to a missionary awakening the Franconia Conference decided at the May 3, 1917 session, "That a Mission Board be organized in this conference district." A committee of three, Joseph Ruth, Frank Swartz and Amos Kolb, was appointed to start the work. They in turn called a meeting to be held at Souderton on Whitmonday, May 28, 1917. Joseph G. Ruth served as temporary chairman of the meeting and J. C. Clemens was secretary. It was decided that each congregation should have one representative on the board. Eighteen congregational representatives were appointed at this meeting to act for the following congregations: Franconia, Salford, Souderton, Lexington, Rockhill, Plain, Towamencin, Hereford, Blooming Glen, Deep Run, Doylestown, Perkasio, Skippack, Worcester, Providence, Vincent, Swamp, and Springfield. (Boyertown and Plumstead were given representation at a later date.) All these members were laymen except one,—the Swamp deacon. At this meeting the organizing committee (named above) was commissioned to draft a constitution and by-laws.

On June 11, 1917 a second meeting was called at which the constitution and by-laws, after alterations, were adopted. Allen A. Freed was elected president; Isaac F. Detweiler, vice president; William D. Roth, secretary; Gerret S. Nice, treasurer; and Christian Moseman, fifth member of the Executive Committee. An offering of \$43.80 was lifted,—and there was a Franconia Mission Board! A charter was secured in July, 1918.

The first public program was given at Doylestown on August 23, 1917. Besides local brethren, G. L. Bender, treasurer of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, and J. F. Bressler of Richfield, Pa., appeared on the program.

The board has not only established and sponsored mission stations and mission Sunday schools, but it has also attempted to reimburse Mennonites who suffer loss by fire.

An annual public meeting (three sessions) is held each spring on the Tuesday preceding the spring conference.

Disbursements for the year from April 15, 1935 to April 13, 1936 amounted to \$13,958.36. Relief work has made the annual income of the mission board irregular, but the peak was reached in 1930 when receipts

¹ Preacher Jacob M. Moyer of Souderton was of assistance in writing this chapter; also individual workers in each mission station. A few words should be said about the name of the board. As early as 1919, probably from the very beginning, the stationery of the Board had the heading, "Mission Board of the Franconia Mennonite Conference District." This name is still in use. But the *Constitution and By-Laws of the Mission Board of the Franconia Mennonite Conference District* . . . states in Article I, "The name shall be 'The Franconia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities.'"

totalled \$26,483.02. The board owns two mission stations, Norristown, which cost \$10,630.15 (no debt); and Pottstown, which cost \$4,193.89 (\$2,800 debt).

PHILADELPHIA

Before taking up the modern mission stations in the district a word should be said of the Philadelphia Mennonite Mission. The Philadelphia Mission was started by the "Lancaster Conference Sunday School Mission," now the "Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities." The committee to decide on the site consisted of John H. Mellinger of the Lancaster Conference, and Joseph Bechtel and Isaac Kulp, residents of Philadelphia and members of congregations of the Franconia Conference. Joseph Bechtel also served as superintendent of the mission Sunday school from the beginning of the mission in 1899 until his death in 1928. The fall session (1899) of the Franconia Conference decided that inasmuch as there are about forty Mennonites in Philadelphia, if those members desire preaching services, conference permits the ministers to preach there,—but the meetings shall be conducted "as at home." Conference assumed no responsibility for the mission but decided that whoever so desires may give it financial support. The (Mensch) minutes of the spring (1900) session show that Andrew Mack passed out "slips" for Franconia ministers to preach at the Philadelphia Mission until fall. The minutes of the fall (1900) conference relate that the bishops (*vollen Diener*) met at the home of Deacon Abraham Clemmer the evening of October 3 (Wednesday) to discuss the Philadelphia Mission and the practice of preaching there. Opposition had developed but the bishops again decided that any minister who desired to preach there had the privilege. They decided further that Joseph Bechtel should look for a place to hold services and John Esch (Ehst) and Henry Wismer (ministers) should see if the place were appropriate. At the May, 1901 conference, permission to help in the work at the mission (if no other place could be found) was given. But again the ministers shall conduct the service "as at home." This was again reaffirmed at the fall (1901) conference. Finally at the May 3, 1907 session Bishop Andrew Mack announced that the Lancaster Conference had taken charge of the Philadelphia Mission and that Isaac Eby had the bishop oversight. At the May 7, 1908 session conference decided to aid in the purchase of the mission property (\$11,000). Joseph Bechtel alone paid \$4,000. And the Franconia Conference Mennonites have ever since continued to assist in the work of the Mennonite Home Mission now located at 2151 North Howard Street, Philadelphia.

NORRISTOWN

21 West Marshall Street

During the latter part of the nineteenth century a number of Mennonites were living in Norristown for whom Franconia Conference ministers preached every four weeks in the Church of the Brethren (Dunkard) meetinghouse on Barbadoes Street. Services were begun about 1870, according to D. K. Cassel, and in 1890 the membership was about twenty. Due to some difficulties, services in the Dunkard meetinghouse were discontinued soon

after the beginning of the present century. Services were then occasionally conducted in private homes but for a number of years no Mennonite services were conducted in Norristown.

At the May 3, 1917 session of conference it was decided "That an investigating committee be appointed to look into the matter of getting a church house at Norristown, Pa. Wilson Moyer, Joseph Oberholtzer, and Martin Hunsberger were appointed on this committee." (All three were deacons.) That same year the Franconia Mission Board was organized. The board, after some time, purchased the present site of the mission, 21 West Marshall Street, and made alterations and improvements. The mission was formally opened on April 6, 1919.

The mission home was a three-story brick building, having nine rooms and a bath. The Mission Board later decided to build a mission hall on the adjoining lot. The first services were held in the new hall on February 9, 1924. Formal opening services were held the next day. The hall is eighteen by forty-five feet. A door leads from the hall into the mission home.

Sunday school and church services are held every Sunday afternoon and church services every Sunday evening. (Song services and young people's meetings are often held on Saturday evening.) The pulpit was supplied by various ministers from the Franconia Conference until October, 1929 when J. C. Clemens was appointed supply pastor. He preached there until May, 1931, after which W. R. Moyer succeeded him. One or more ministers have since been appointed at each meeting of conference to preach regularly at Norristown. Evangelistic meetings have been held every year or two since the mission was started.

The following have served as superintendent: Elmer B. Moyer, 1919-1920; Allen A. Freed, 1920-1921; Willis K. Lederach, 1921-1928; William G. Detweiler, 1928-1931; Lewellyn Groff, 1931-1934; William F. Hoffman, 1934-1935; Paul E. Mininger, 1935-1936. On November 10, 1936 Markley H. Clemmer was ordained as resident pastor for the mission.

Workers who have served at the mission include Martha Moyer, Mamie Freed, Alice Keeler, Grace Souder, Frances Lerch, and Verda Moyer.

LIMERICK, PA.

The Limerick Mission Sunday School has a history of which part is perhaps best forgotten. It was started in the spring of 1923 by Mennonites of the Skippack and Vincent congregations and without the consent of the Mission Board or conference. Funds were raised to buy the abandoned church which is now rented, but this money was returned to the donors. Four brethren were excommunicated for insubordination in starting the work without consent, and the Sunday school was closed. Later these four were reinstated. Some of them then united with the Amish Mennonite Church at Morgantown, and some displeased members moved away. The Limerick Sunday School was then opened again by the Amish Mennonites but was later closed.

The Franconia Mission Board finally reopened the Limerick Sunday School in 1932. The first session was held on November 13. The board ap-

pointed the officers, Elias P. Nice, superintendent; Jonas Weaver, assistant superintendent, and Paul Brunk, treasurer. In 1935 the board appointed True Sheetz to succeed Elias P. Nice. Several attendants were converted and were baptized by Bishop Bean, but no congregation has been established at Limerick. The Sunday school met every Sunday afternoon and had an average attendance of forty, but the work was again discontinued in 1936.

FINLAND, PA.

The first Mennonite service in the Finland region was a cottage meeting conducted in the home of Amelia Seidel, a German widow, by Preacher Jacob M. Moyer on February 19, 1931. A hall was soon rented and a Sunday school started. The first session was held on May 17, 1931. The officers chosen at that time were Clayton A. Godshall, superintendent; Jacob C. Kulp, assistant; Henry L. Ruth, secretary-treasurer. On March 12, 1933 the Mission Board appointed Claude M. Shisler superintendent. In 1935 the average attendance was 135, with 81 coming from the local community. Evangelistic services are held annually. Twenty converts have been baptized. The present membership (from the community) at Finland is 25. A junior sewing circle was started on January 4, 1936. Religious services were held every Thursday evening until 1934 when they were displaced by Bible study classes. Communion services are also held at Finland. The Sunday school meets every Sunday morning and church services are held on the second and fourth Sunday evenings of each month.

ROCKY RIDGE

This station is located near the Rockhill stone quarry, a few miles north of Sellersville, Pa. Reuben Diller and Linford Hackman of the Souderton congregation distributed *The Way*, a monthly tract, in the Rocky Ridge community in 1931. These workers held several cottage meetings, the first one at the home of William Anderson on March 19, 1931. They then secured the help of the field worker of the Mission Board (Jacob M. Moyer) in finding a mission hall. A Sunday school was opened in an old log house owned by an Italian Catholic, Joseph Donise. This building burned to the ground on November 23, 1931. Mr. Donise at once built a two-story house, 28 ft. x 32 ft., suitable for Sunday school and church purposes, and continued to rent it to the Mission Board.

The first and only officers were appointed by the Mission Board when the Sunday school was started, namely, Linford Hackman, superintendent; Reuben Diller, assistant; Abram K. Landis, secretary-treasurer. The average attendance is about 65. Eighteen members have been received or baptized. The present membership is eleven.

The Rocky Ridge and Finland territory is a strip of rough and hilly land about five by ten miles in size. Finland has many Germans. The Rocky Ridge people are about equally divided among Italians and other southern Europeans, native white Americans, and negroes.

Sunday school is held every Sunday morning at Rocky Ridge, and church services, the first and third Sundays of each month. Bible study or

song service is held on Thursday evening. Communion services are held regularly. Annual evangelistic services are conducted.

POTTSTOWN, PA.

306 North Charlotte Street

In 1930 Earl Miller and family of the Norristown Mission moved to Pottstown. W. G. Detweiler and J. M. Moyer at once began to investigate the possibility of opening a mission station there. On behalf of the Mission Board they chose 380 North Charlotte Street and on November 23, 1930 Preacher Jacob M. Moyer conducted services there. Prior to that time members of the Norristown Mission had conducted cottage meetings at the Miller home. On December 21, 1930 the first Sunday school was conducted with Elmer G. Kolb serving as superintendent and Arthur G. Kolb the assistant. They were appointed by the Mission Board and are from the Vincent congregation. Since March 4, 1934 the present location has been used.

Sunday school and church services are held every Sunday afternoon, and a children's meeting and Bible study, on Tuesday evening. The Sunday-school attendance averages 109. Annual evangelistic services are held. Thirty-nine people have been baptized by Bishop Bean who also serves communion at Pottstown twice a year.

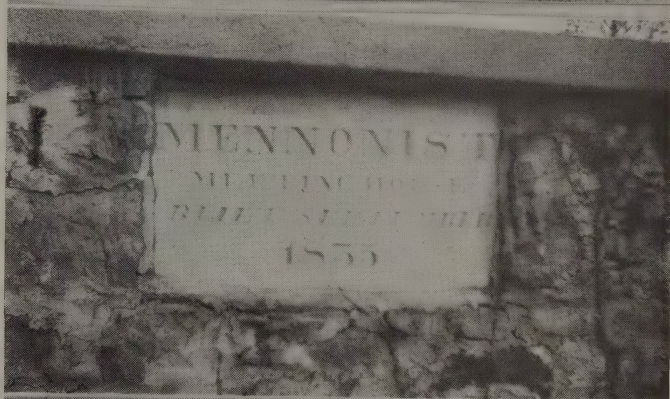
A sewing circle meets the first Wednesday of each month.

SPRING MOUNT

The Spring Mount Mennonite Mission is located a mile or two north of Schwenksville, Pa. The work there was begun by Clayton A. Godshall, former Finland superintendent. On Ascension Day, 1934, he and Abraham Kriebel walked from Souderton to Spring Mount to investigate the need and possibility of starting a mission Sunday school there. Ten days later he made a more thorough investigation. The Mission Board then took charge and on July 15, 1934 organized a Sunday school using members of the Salford congregation as officers. Edwin Moyer was superintendent; Maurice Kerr, assistant; Abram Landis, secretary. In 1935 Paul Ruth succeeded Edwin Moyer. The building is rented by the Mission Board. The Sunday school meets every Sunday afternoon. Bible study classes meet every Tuesday evening. Evangelistic services were conducted in May, 1935.

PERKIOMENVILLE, PA.

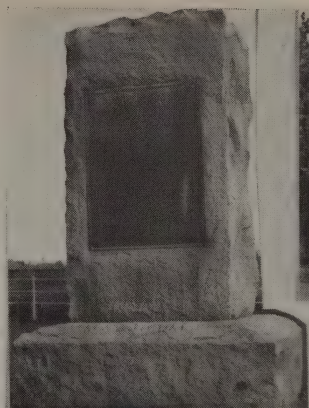
During August and September, 1934, Clayton A. Godshall investigated the religious needs of the Perkiomenville region, distributing tracts, Bibles, and Testaments. The Mission Board favorably considered the new field and on June 2, 1935 opened a Sunday school in a rented building. They appointed Brother Godshall as superintendent; Isaac Alderfer (of Towamencin), assistant; and Milton Kolb (of Vincent), secretary-treasurer. Sunday school is held every Sunday afternoon. The attendance now averages about 75 from the community. The spiritual activities are similar to the other stations.



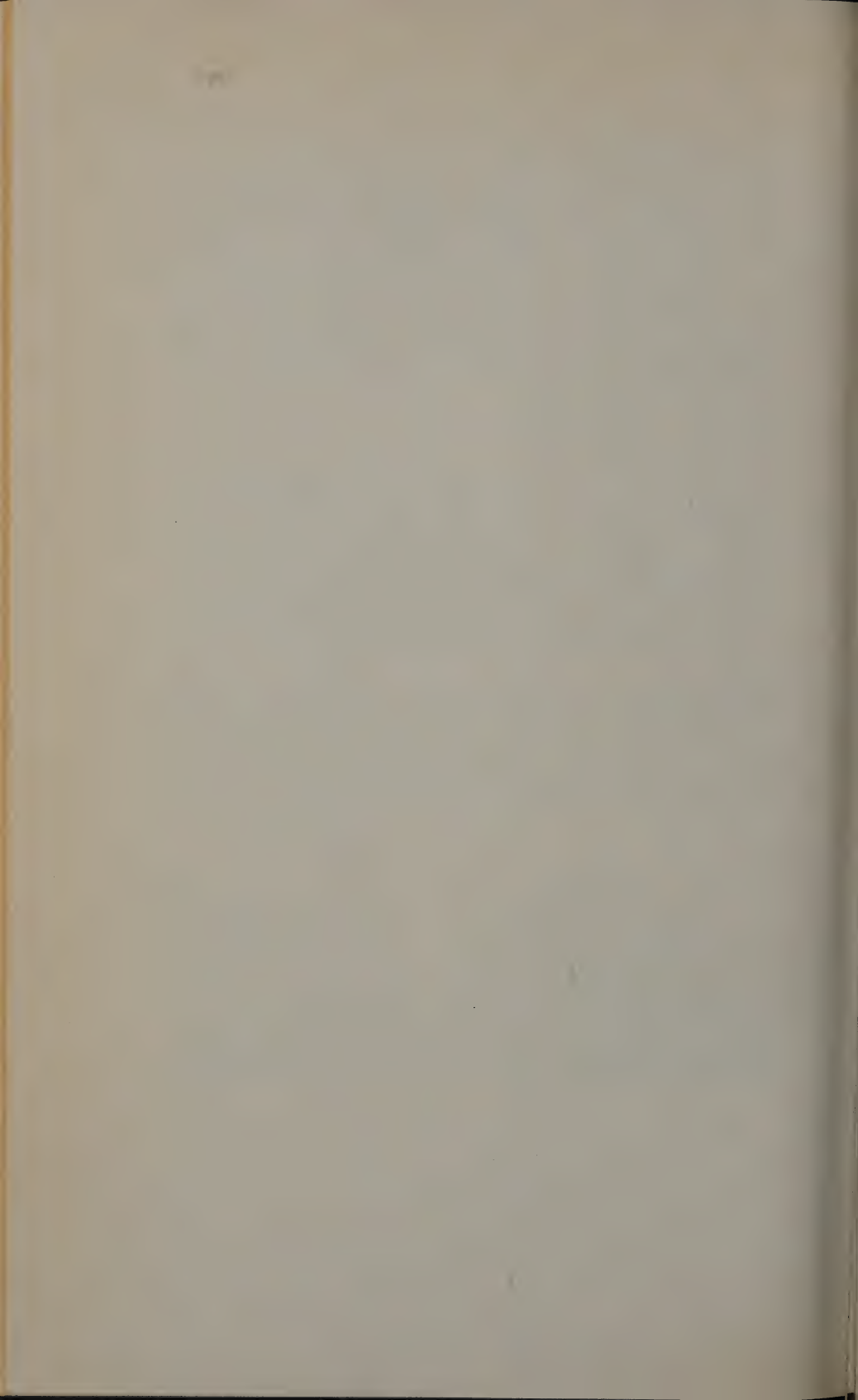
Phoenixville Meetinghouse, Built 1794; Razed about 1873

Stone from the Diamond Rock Meetinghouse, Now
in the Cemetery Wall

Diamond Rock Burying Ground



Siegfried Monument, Northampton, Pa. Settlement Meetinghouse,
Built 1802; Now a Dwelling. Settlement Burying Ground. Spro-
gel Burying Ground, Pottstown, Pa. (about 1885). Rothrock
Meetinghouse, Removed to a New Location and
Used to Store Machinery





The Buildings in Which the Mission Sunday Schools of the Franconia Conference Are Conducted (1936)

Pottstown

Gardenville

Norristown

Perkiomenville

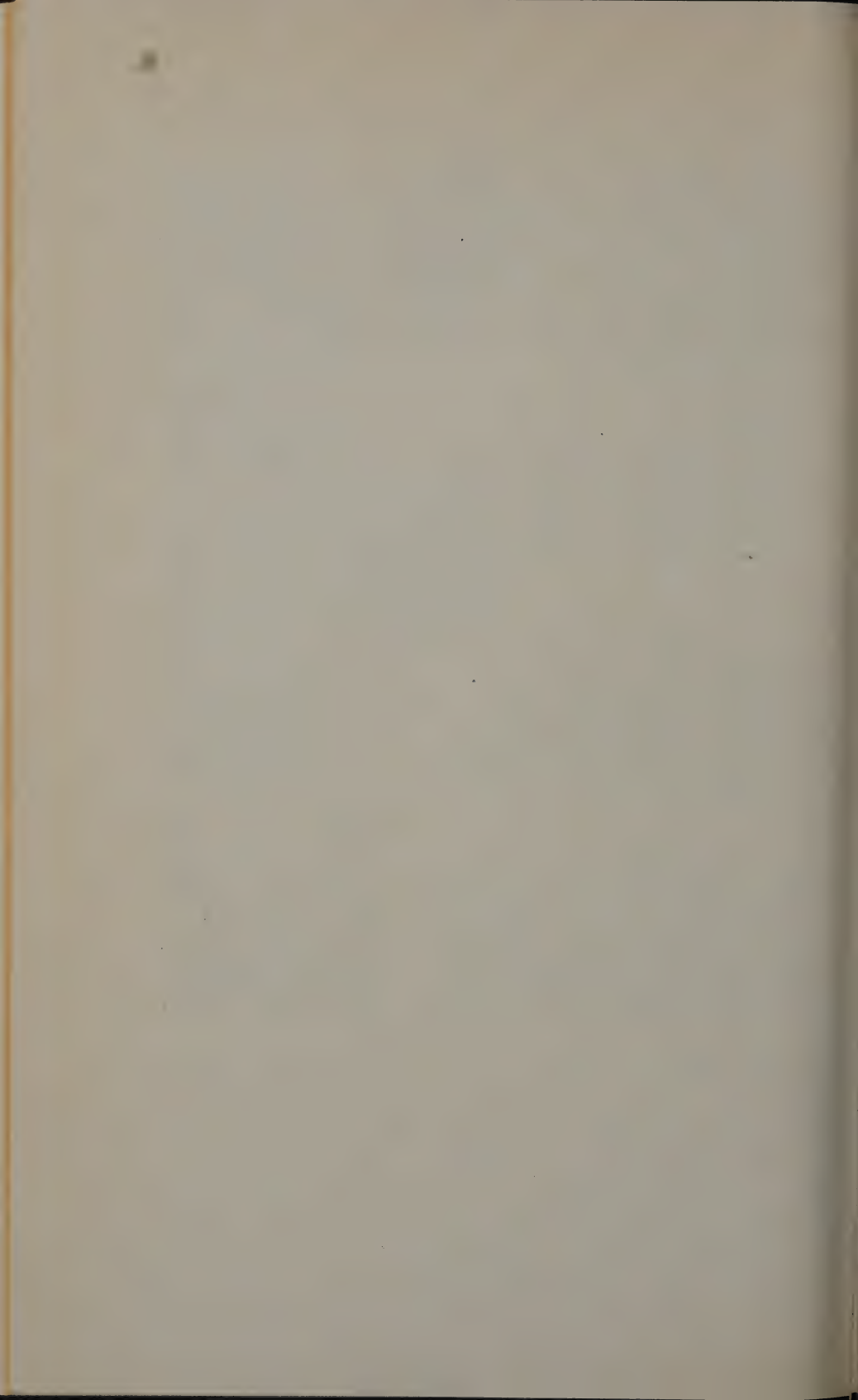
Finland

Lansdale

Rocky Ridge

Limerick

Spring Mount





Eastern Mennonite Home, Souderton, Pa. Built 1916; Enlarged 1921



Fricks' Meetinghouse, Built about 1882

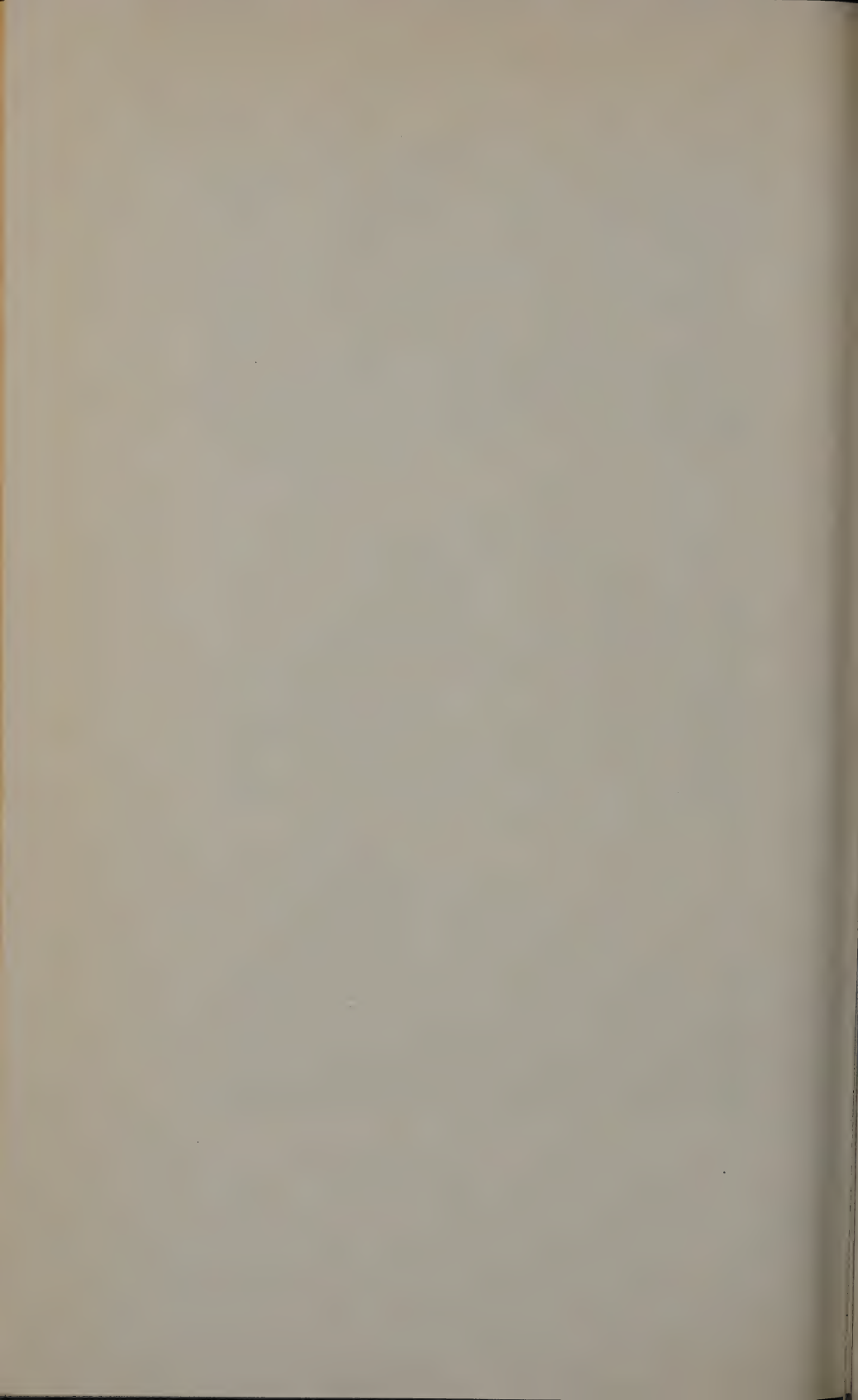
Delps' Meetinghouse, Built at This Location 1855



Bertolets' Meetinghouse, Built 1847

Schwenksville Meetinghouse, Built 1894

Flatland Meetinghouse, Built 1837

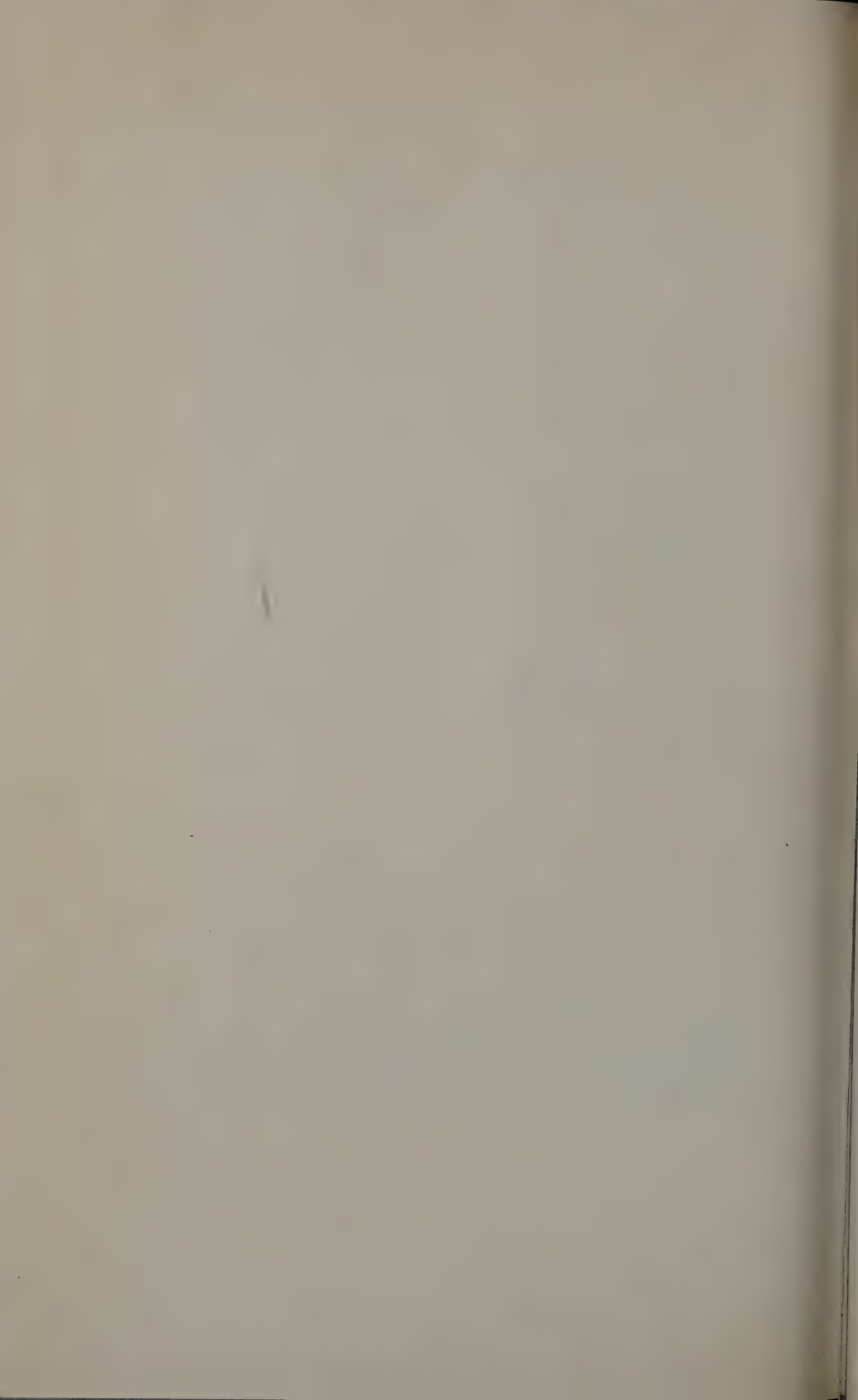




West Swamp Meetinghouse, Built 1873

East Swamp Meetinghouse, Built 1850

Upper Milford Meetinghouse, Built 1876





A Group of General Conference Mennonite Churches

Souderton

Lansdale

Bally

Quakertown

Allentown

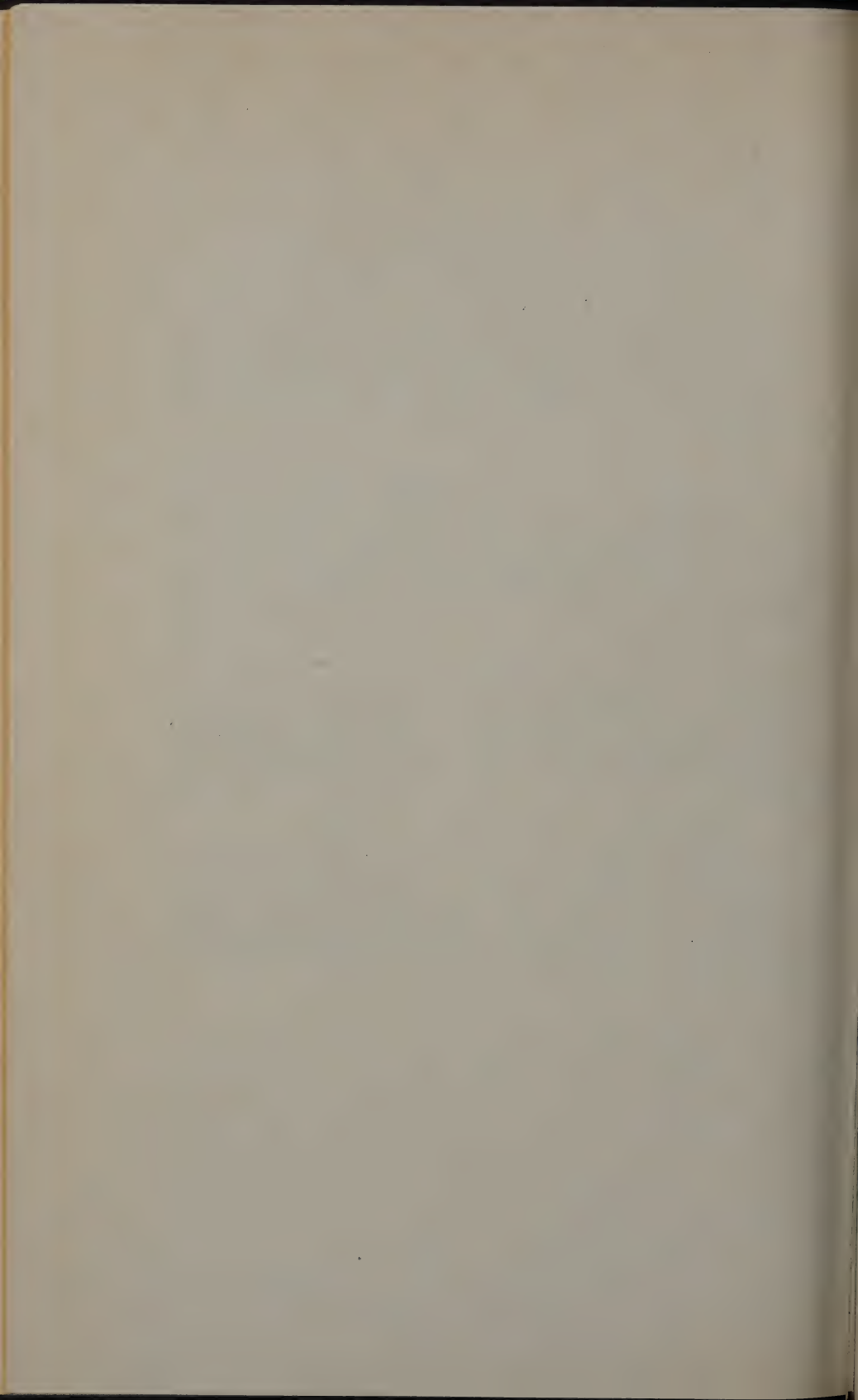
Boyertown

II Mennonite, Phila.

I Mennonite, Phila.

Deep Run

Perkasie





Courtesy of Freeman H. Swartz

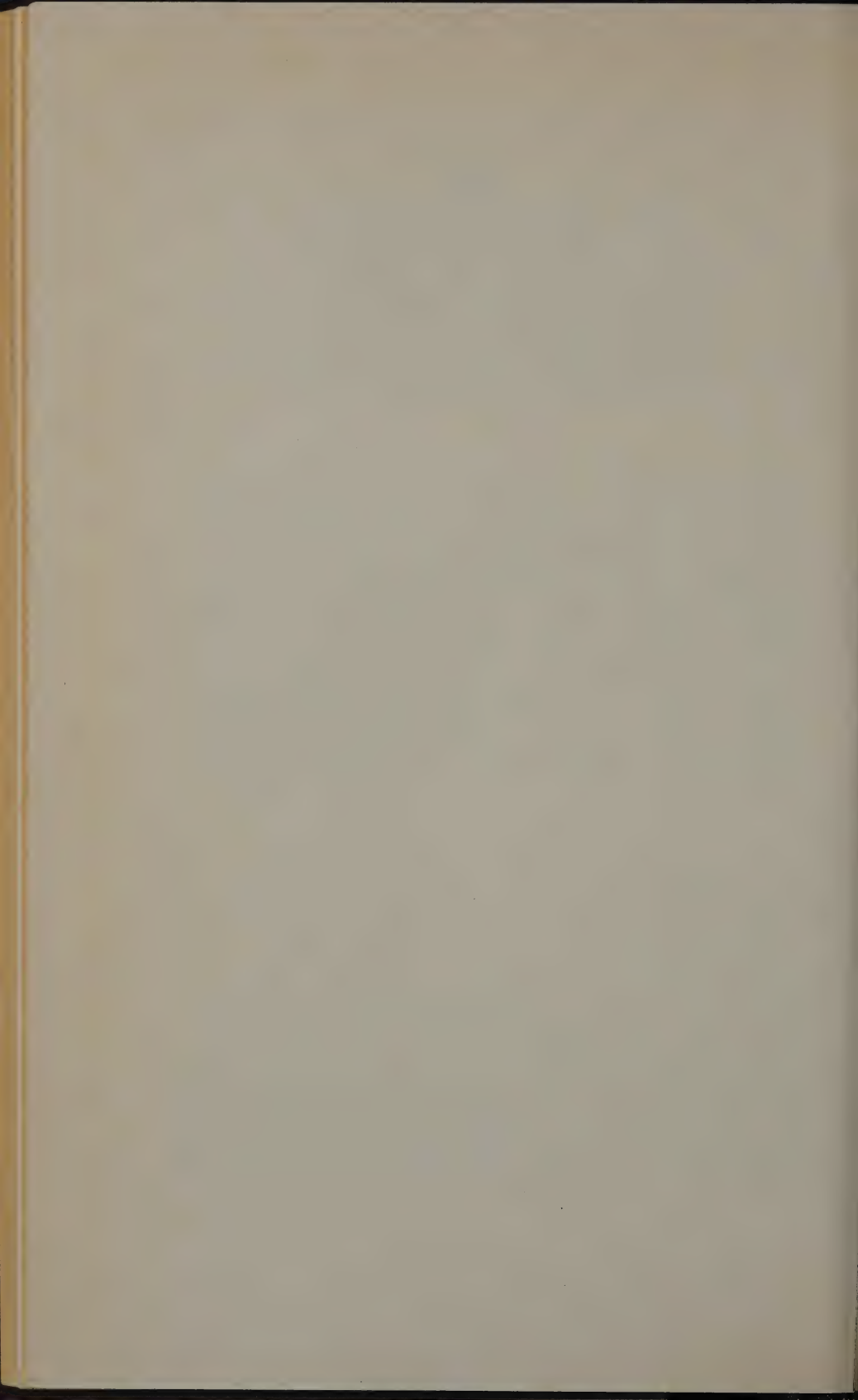
The 1851 Schwenksville Mennonite Church



Worcester Reformed Mennonite Meetinghouse, Built 1890



Hersteins' Meetinghouse, Built 1803(?)



LANSDALE, PA.

In April, 1935 Preacher John E. Lapp and others decided to make a survey in the public schools of Lansdale to ascertain how many children were not attending any Sunday school. Printed slips were distributed through the schools asking: (1) "Do you attend Sunday school?" (2) "Name of Sunday school." Blanks were also provided for the name, address, age, and grade of the pupil. It was found that 148 public school pupils in Lansdale attended no Sunday school. The Mission Board then opened a Sunday school in a rented hall, No. 213 North Broad Street. The first session was held on July 28, 1935. The board appointed the following officers: Jacob Z. Rittenhouse, superintendent; Daniel Leatherman, assistant; Durrell Delp, secretary-treasurer. By January, 1936, there was an attendance of 47 pupils of non-Mennonite parentage. The Sunday school meets every Sunday afternoon.

ALLENTOWN, PA.

In 1930 the Mission Board attempted to open work at Allentown. September 14-28 of that year E. W. Kulp held evangelistic services in a building at 810 Saint John Street which the Mission Board had rented. Preacher David L. Gehman lived in Allentown at the time and took a deep interest in the proposed station. But no Sunday school was started; the hall could no longer be rented, and the work was dropped. The Mennonites of Allentown and vicinity attend church and Sunday-school services at Swamp.

PHOENIXVILLE, PA.

Gay and Walnut Streets

Mennonite mission work in Phoenixville was started by Edwin Moyer of Harleysville. In April, 1935 he and a small number of workers began to conduct cottage meetings, consisting of singing and prayer, in the homes of the sick. Eventually these meetings were held every two weeks. A few street meetings in the poorer sections of the borough were also held. On July 6, 1936 the Franconia Mission Board gave official recognition to the work in Phoenixville and Markley H. Clemmer was appointed leader of the group. Interest increased and the workers divided, holding as many as six meetings every Sunday afternoon or evening.

The October 1, 1936 session of the Franconia Conference authorized the establishment of a mission in Phoenixville.

The building is rented from the Phoenixville Military Band. The first meeting was held there on October 11, 1936, with six adults and twenty children from Phoenixville present. A Sunday school was started and the Mission Board appointed Markley Clemmer superintendent. On November 2, 1936 the Mission Board granted the privilege of having preaching services monthly.

The workers have distributed *The Way* in the borough and interviewed the people, trying to arouse interest in the new Sunday school. The average attendance (total) is about forty.

Markley H. Clemmer was ordained pastor of the Norristown Mission congregation on November 10, 1936. Thereupon his assistant, Norman Bechtel of the Vincent congregation, was appointed superintendent of the Phoenixville Mennonite Mission Sunday School.

GARDENVILLE, PA.

The Gardenville Sunday School is not under the supervision of the Mission Board but is a branch of the Doylestown Mennonite Sunday School. The chapel in which it meets was built in 1887 as a union building. About 1920 the building was abandoned. But an aged Deep Run Mennonite, Annie A. Kramer, bequeathed \$100 to the Gardenville Sunday School! (She had taught there from 1887-1920.) Wesley Gross and Oliver Nyce then started the Sunday school again on July 4, 1926. These brethren had the approval of Bishop Hestand. For a few years a few non-Mennonites taught there but at present all the teachers are Mennonites. Since 1926 the school is closed each year from January to March. Superintendents since 1926 are Oliver Nyce and Wesley Gross, 1926; Oliver Nyce, 1927, 1928; Wilmer Althouse, 1929, 1930; Wesley Gross, 1931, 1932; Joseph Nyce, 1933, 1934; Clarence F. Derstine, 1935, 1936; and J. David Nyce, 1936—. The school has an average attendance of 50 to 60. Some Mennonites had served as superintendent before 1920. Among the superintendents from 1887-1920 were Allen G. Moyer, Mahlon Gross (1900-1903), Edward Leatherman, and John M. Myers.

MEMBERS OF BOARD

The present (1936) members of the Franconia Mennonite Mission Board, by congregations, are, Blooming Glen, Abram B. Gehman; Boyertown, John S. Longacre; Deep Run, Abram W. Detweiler; Doylestown, Samuel Hestand; Franconia, Horace F. Bergey; Hereford, John L. Ehst; Lexington, Isaiah G. Ruth; Perkasio, William M. Moyer; Plain, Marvin D. Ruth; Plumstead, John M. Myers; Providence, Deacon Elmer M. Mack; Rockhill, Jonas M. Detweiler; Salford, Gerret S. Nice; Skippack, Charles K. Johnson; Souderton, Alpheus K. Allebach; Springfield, Moses L. Moyer; Swamp, Daniel Yoder; Towamencin, Irwin K. Moyer; Vincent, John W. Kolb; and Worcester, Harry I. Davis. The Executive Committee consists of Isaiah G. Ruth, president; Alpheus K. Allebach, vice president; Gerret S. Nice, treasurer; Marvin D. Ruth, secretary, and Horace F. Bergey, fifth member.

Chapter V

EASTERN MENNONITE HOME

In 1914 considerable sentiment was created by a number of brethren in favor of the establishment of an old people's home. William M. Moyer of Perkasio was an active promoter. He found Bishop Henry B. Rosenberger sympathetic. He also wrote to the senior bishop, Andrew S. Mack, regarding the proposal. The October 1, 1914 session of the Franconia Conference passed a resolution, "That an investigating committee composed of one member from each of the four Bishop districts be appointed to look into the matter of the 'Old People's Home' as follows: Joel Bowers, Boyertown, Pa.; Wm. M. Moyer, Perkasio, Pa.; Wm. K. Cassel, Yerkess, Pa.; Garret S. Nyce, Harleysville, Pa." (Some of these names are incorrectly spelled.) On October 19, 1914 these four laymen organized as follows: William M. Moyer, chairman; Joel B. Bower, secretary; Gerret S. Nice, treasurer. The chairman at once announced a visiting tour of several Lancaster county homes. The committee visited the Brethren, Mennonite, and Reformed Homes. A committee meeting was held, after this tour, on November 21, 1914.

Bishop Mack called a joint meeting of the committee and the bishops on December 12, 1914. All the committee and all the bishops except Samuel D. Detweiler were present. The bishops adopted a plan that the ordained men in each of the four bishop districts should appoint a trustee or trustees for the home: one in Mack's district, two in Bean's district, four in Rosenberger's district, and five in the district of Mininger and Clemmer.

In the October 7, 1915 session conference approved the building of a home but declined any financial responsibility. Conference also appointed Deacons Krupp and W. R. Moyer as their agents. These brethren called a meeting on November 25, 1915 in the basement of Souderton Mennonite Church at which time the following trustees were named for the several districts: Franconia, G. S. Nice, Henry Landis, Deacon Krupp, Deacon H. B. Lapp, and John Nice; Deep Run, Deacons W. R. Moyer, Levi N. Moyer, A. G. Gross and Joseph B. Overholt; Skippack, Deacons J. Martin Hunsberger and Charles Kolb; Hereford, Joseph Bechtel. These twelve trustees were instructed to appoint solicitors, one for every hundred members. The trustees met on the same day and organized; W. R. Moyer, president; Joseph B. Overholt, vice president; Henry C. Krupp, treasurer.

On January 1, 1916 the trustees again met and transacted the following business: (1) A. G. Gross was appointed secretary. (2) The home shall be built near Souderton. (3) Building operations shall be started with the present fund, \$19,616.50. (4) Its name shall be, Eastern Mennonite Home.

At the next meeting, held on January 15, 1916, Isaac M. Clemmer was appointed to succeed Henry Landis who had resigned as trustee. A committee consisting of W. R. Moyer, H. C. Krupp, and John Nice, was asked

to decide upon a site. On March 20 the trustees accepted the present location, at Souderton; and also decided to apply for a charter. Seven days later the president appointed the building committee, W. R. Moyer, H. C. Krupp, Joseph Bechtel, John Nice, and G. S. Nice.

On March 27, 1916 the trustees decided to build a home large enough to care for fifty inmates. This was done at a cost of \$33,655.55. On February 19, 1917 the trustees elected Alpheus K. Allebach as steward. The home was opened in May. On March 3, 1919 Daniel L. Gehman succeeded A. K. Allebach.

In May, 1921 the trustees decided to erect an annex. This was done at a cost of \$50,505.74. On November 22, 1922 the steward resigned and Solomon Good served temporarily until the appointment of John Gehman on January 1, 1923. He was succeeded on September 23 of that year by Frank Moyer who served until 1927. On March 7, 1927 Jacob M. Landis and wife, the present steward and matron, took charge.

The main building is about 36 ft by 141 ft. and the annex 36 ft. by 96 ft. The home is equipped with eighty-eight bedrooms, twenty-eight baths and lavatories, four social rooms, an office, and a dispensary. The building is equipped with an electric elevator, a vacuum cleaner, a hot water heating system, ice machine and cold air room. The dining room can care for 100 guests and the chapel seats 200.

At the present time Deacon John F. Detweiler is president of the Board of Trustees. The other trustees are, Deacons Abram G. Gross, Harvey C. Freed, Levi N. Moyer,¹ Charles Kolb, Abram A. Wambold, Jacob T. Landes, Daniel G. Gahman, Henry K. Delp and Abraham G. Ehst; and laymen Gerret S. Nice and John S. Nice.

The home employs a staff of sixteen workers besides the steward and matron. Annual expenses amount to about twenty thousand dollars. The institution has no debt.

A Sunday-school service is conducted every Sunday morning. Usually visiting laymen teach the lesson of the day to the whole group which assembles in the auditorium. Church services are conducted every two weeks on Sunday afternoon.

¹ Deceased, October 1, 1936.

Chapter VI

FRANCONIA MENNONITE AID PLAN FOR MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE

When a Mennonite in the Franconia Conference suffers loss by fire the usual custom has been to lift offerings in the several congregations of the district to aid the unfortunate brother. Until recent years little systematic effort was made to appraise the loss and raise funds.

At the October, 1883 session of the Franconia Conference¹ it was decided that in case a brother suffered loss by fire offerings should be lifted in the congregations toward covering his loss. And if the amount raised was not sufficient, offerings should again be lifted, and so on until the brother was cared for.²

The first systematic attempt to organize a Mennonite Aid Plan was made in 1896.³ The leading figure in promoting the proposed organization was Allen A. Freed of the Salford congregation. The secretaries were to be Samuel R. Swartley and Jacob K. Clemmer. By-laws were drafted.

However conference turned down this proposal and decided to appoint an appraisal committee of three brethren and to lift one or more offerings for each loss by fire (or storm). The first case was the destruction of Herman Delp's barn.⁴ The loss was not covered by the first offerings but no further offerings were lifted for Delp. It became customary to lift only one offering in each congregation.

After the organization of the Franconia Mission Board this organization began to handle cases of loss by fire among the brotherhood.

But long before 1883 Mennonites had begun to insure in nonreligious fire insurance companies. As early as 1843 Preacher Jacob Detweiler of Rockhill insured his farm buildings for \$5,643.75 in the "Line Lexington Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Bucks And Montgomery Counties For The Insurance of Real and Personal Property."⁵ And long before the organization of the Franconia Mennonite Aid Plan in 1936 a great many Mennonites were already insured in various fire insurance companies. A number of Mennonites are also agents for this type of insurance.

In May, 1935, the Franconia Conference passed a resolution favoring the organization of a Mennonite Aid Plan.⁶ The bishops appointed a com-

¹ According to the minutes of Jacob B. Mensch.

² ". . . und so fort bis das es recht."

³ Based on information furnished by David K. Allebach, Hatfield, Pa.

⁴ Mensch refers in his 1896 conference minutes to the decision of conference to lift offerings for Delp whose barn had collapsed in a storm—" . . . zu samme geblosen ist."

⁵ The original policy is in the possession of Jonas M. Detweiler, Sellersville, Pa., a great-grandson of Preacher Jacob.

⁶ Ernest R. Clemens, Lansdale, Pa., contributed the following information.

mittee of four, Isaiah G. Ruth, Preacher Henry G. Bechtel, Deacon Abram G. Gross, and Preacher J. C. Clemens, to study the proposal and draw up by-laws for the proposed aid plan.

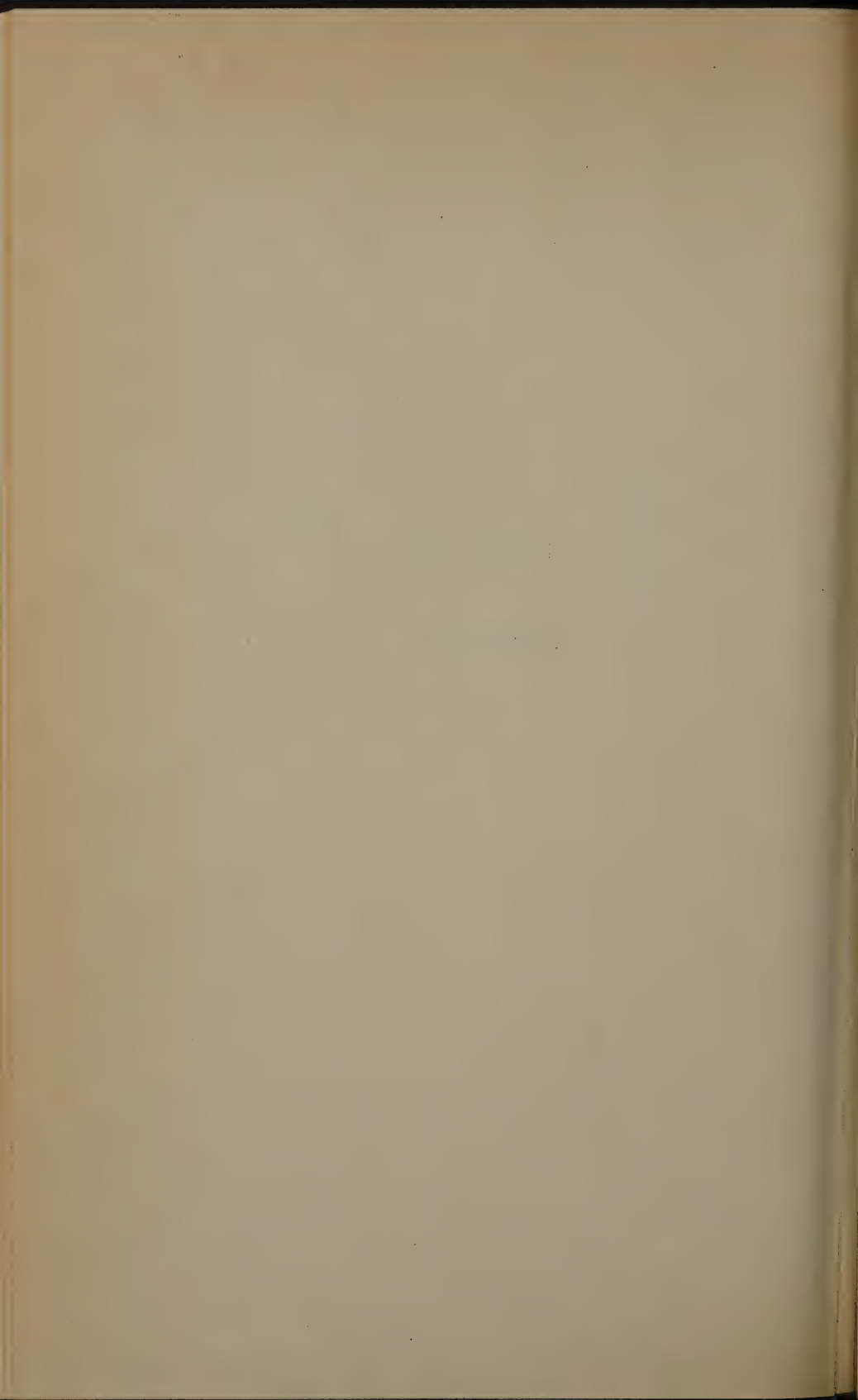
A public meeting was held in the Franconia Mennonite meetinghouse on August 17, 1936. The by-laws drafted were read and explained. H. D. Weaver of Harrisonburg, Virginia, was also present and described the organization of the Aid Plan in the Virginia Mennonite Conference and answered questions. A majority present at the meeting at Franconia favored the organization of an aid plan.

The October, 1935, session of conference passed a resolution authorizing the procurement of a state charter. The State of Pennsylvania granted a charter to the new organization on December 2, 1936.

The bishops appointed the following directors, John Kolb, John Long-acre, Norman Reinford, William D. Moyer, Samuel C. Landis, Samuel D. Landis, Jacob A. Tyson, Abram Derstine, Ezra Myers, Henry A. Bishop, and Ernest R. Clemens. The Board of Directors organized as follows: John W. Kolb, president; Henry A. Bishop, secretary; Ernest R. Clemens, treasurer.

Part Five

SCHISMS



Chapter I

THE FUNKITES

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This volume does not profess to give a history of the groups which have separated from the Franconia Conference, but brief attention will be given to the several schisms. The General Conference Mennonites are the only large group whose history needs to be discussed. The Funkites and the Hunsicker group disintegrated. The Godshall and Herrite groups are pitifully small. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ represent such an amalgamation of schismatic bodies that they can scarcely be considered a Mennonite group. The "Johnson" Mennonites number a few hundred with only one minister.

THE FUNKITES¹

The first schism among the Pennsylvania Mennonites took place during the Revolutionary War, and the war was the cause of it. The attitude of the Mennonites toward the war was doubtless a complex one. Of course they didn't want war; it was largely for religious freedom that they had fled to America and they dreaded any political upheaval which might disturb the splendid toleration which they enjoyed. Therefore when the American Colonies rebelled against his Majesty, King George III of England, a large part of the Mennonites undoubtedly were secretly in sympathy with the king, though of course, as nonresistants, they would not participate in any war,—whether it was for or against their interests. This interpretation is supported by the fact that quite a number of Mennonites from Bucks and Montgomery counties emigrated to Canada after the war;—though of course, again, the motives which led to emigration were doubtless mixed.

When the war broke out the Franconia Conference included about twenty ministers and at least five bishops (see the 1773 letter in the appendix). Bishop Isaac Kolb died in 1776. At the time there was an able bishop named Christian Funk in the Franconia Conference. Funk was a son of the only writer among the American Mennonites during the Colonial period, Bishop Henry Funk. It was probably Christian Funk who wrote the 1773 letter which two older bishops joined in signing.

Christian Funk held the same view as most of his fellow ministers in 1776. In that year a meeting was held in Funk's own township (Indian

¹ David K. Allebach kindly submitted a paper on Christian Funk. A brief discussion is to be found in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, October, 1927, pp. 30-31, in the article, "Pacifism Among the Mennonites, Amish Mennonites and Schwenkfelders of Pennsylvania to 1783," by Wilbur J. Bender. The main source of information however, has been Funk's own polemic, *Spiegel fuer alle Menschen*, Reading, Pa., 1813.

Field, now Franconia) which he attended. At that time Funk was fearful lest the Mennonites should lose the freedom of conscience given by William Penn. When Funk arrived at the township meeting he observed that two thirds of those present were Mennonites and one third were (state) "church people." Funk immediately asked if anything had yet been done. He was told not. He then expressed his opinion that the Mennonites could not interfere in tearing away from the king, "for we acknowledged ourselves a defenceless people and could neither institute nor destroy any government." But as everyone knows, Pennsylvania and the other colonies united in a war against the king of Great Britain. Funk and the other Mennonite ministers of southeastern Pennsylvania dreaded the outcome for they feared a loss of the religious freedom which they so much appreciated.

Up until this point, Funk declares, there had been no friction between himself and his fellow ministers. But the trouble soon began. The occasion came about in the following manner. Funk secured a Pennsylvania Constitution in which he was delighted to find that under the new government no one was to be forced into the army or compelled to swear an oath contrary to his conscientious scruples. All religious societies had a right to hold their services. This caused Funk to turn the matter over in his mind. But all the while Funk's fellow ministers kept saying that Congress was in rebellion,—and of course Mennonites couldn't support a rebellion! Funk, however, as opportunity presented itself, began to urge that they should not speak in that way of the American Government; "for there were already four republics and perhaps America would be another." Just let the Americans and the English fight it out! "For the English had taken America from the Spanish and now the Americans in turn wished to take it from the English. But that was merely foolishness to my fellow-ministers.² And then our government laid a tax on every man: three pounds ten shillings, Congress paper-money. All my fellow-ministers were unanimously of the opinion that we couldn't pay the tax to the rebels; that would be hostile to the king. I said, my opinion was that we could pay it, since it was Congress money and we received it and paid our debts with it."

There was no open trouble until the spring of 1777 when Funk called the eight ministers (and deacons) of his bishop district together as was customary (die kleine Rath^{2a}) to make arrangements for communion. There was then some caviling but in the end Funk overcame their opposition and "thereupon a great communion was held." But the other leaders constantly took a firmer stand against paying the war tax to the Colonial government.

After the harvest in 1778 there were nineteen applicants for baptism. Unable to stop Funk from performing the baptism his ministers and deacons refused to assist him in the service. So after counsel with friends, Funk's brother John brought the water for the baptisms. This was the limit. His fellow ministers forbade Funk to continue in his office. But with

² It should be observed that the outcome of a revolution determines whether it is "honorable." If a revolution fails, it was an unworthy rebellion. If it succeeds, it was a noble fight for "liberty." Funk simply judged the outcome better than his friends.

^{2a} Now held in the Franconia bishop district on the first Thursday in March.

the backing of fifteen or twenty members Funk decided to go ahead with his work. Soon thereafter Bishop Abraham Swartz of Deep Run and Bishop Andrew Ziegler of Skippack, together with Funk's fellow ministers, called a meeting of the Franconia congregation at which the leaders announced that any one taking the Declaration of Allegiance (to the American Government) or even adhering to that party ("oder nur auf die Seite haengt") should there have nothing to say. Various charges were then presented against Funk, the chief one concerning the Declaration of Allegiance. Funk declared he had not taken it but firmly refused to take a stand against it. Funk was then told to stop preaching, that is, he was "silenced" or deposed from office.

But Funk's sons-in-law and various other brethren came to him and said they believed as he did. Consequently the Funkite group held their services in the meetinghouse on the Sunday when the building had not been used. But they were soon locked out and were forced to worship under the open sky. Thereafter they worshiped in houses and barns until after Funk's death.

In 1783 England recognized the freedom of the American Colonies and Funk then hoped that his group, who had been under the "ban" for five years, would be recognized, inasmuch as the issues which had divided them were then dead. But by that time there was a strong personal dislike of Funk and various charges were held against him,—such as selling a neighbor's ram and cheating the township!

Finally in 1804 Bishops Jacob Gross of Deep Run and David Ruth of Lexington agreed to interview Funk. But no agreement could be reached. In May, 1805 Bishop Henry Hunsicker made another vain attempt to settle the trouble. In 1806 Hunsicker sent word to Funk that he should come to the afternoon session of the conference to be held on the first Thursday in May. At that meeting Funk was called on to speak. With fear (he said) he made his defense. He rehearsed his story. During the twenty-eight years ten bishops had died³ and six had been ordained in their places. He spoke of the unfortunate results of such divisions and pleaded his cause very effectively. After prayer they discussed the situation. Since the men who had silenced Funk had died, the leaders (in 1806) did not wish to blame them. On the other hand Funk proudly refused to be received back as a transgressor. But finally love won; they made peace and they all greeted Funk with the hand of fellowship and a kiss.

But the reconciliation was not permanent. After holding five inquiry meetings⁴ Bishop David Ruth was compelled to ask Funk to receive the "ban," that is, be received as a transgressor; and further, John Funk^{4a} could not be recognized as a preacher nor John Detweiler^{4b} as a deacon. Funk again refused to be received as a transgressor and no reconciliation was effected.

³ " . . . bis zehn von ihren bestaeten Dienern gestorben . . . ," *Spiegel*, p. 45.

⁴ " . . . Umfrage zu halten . . . ," *ibid.*, p. 50.

^{4a} A younger brother of Christian Funk.

^{4b} A son-in-law of Christian Funk.

It should also be mentioned that we of today have only Funk's account of the schism.

Funk completed the writing of his *Spiegel* on November 10, 1809. At that time he still had not given up hope of a reconciliation. He died May 31, 1811 with his hope unfulfilled.

Christian Funk had a brother, Henry, in the Swamp district who was ordained to the ministry in 1768. During the Revolutionary War he took the same position as his noted brother Christian, and was also excluded from the communion of the church. This was the occasion for some difficulty as the following letter shows. The letter also indicates that Christian Funk was a strong figure in the community,—perhaps too much involved in politics to please his brethren.

LETTER TO DR. JOSEPH GARDNER

MEMBER OF COUNCIL

SKIPPACK TOWNSHIP, PA.

OCT. 4, 1781.

Sir:

The bearer hereof Mr. Henry Funck, is going to Council with a complaint respecting a Demand of Substitute Fines made on him by Frederick Limback, Esqr. one of the Sub-Lieutenants of Northampton county.

The complaint, I confess, appears to me of a new kind and Mr. Funck states it thus. That he (Mr. Funck) is a Preacher and has been so for many years, among the people called Menonists, but having taken the test of the State and done a great deal of Business for the publick, in the purchasing and milling way, was read out of that society; and as he is not now acknowledged a preacher by the Body of the society.

Mr. Limback says he can not consider himself such, and consequently Fines him for neglect of duty in the militia. Altho' he favors many Non-Juror preachers of the same people. Mr. Funck can inform you more particularly of the circumstances; but this I know, that he and his brother Christian Funck (a remarkably strong whig) are preaching to the few well affected of that society; That he is a man of good character, (so think there is no reason of reading him out of the society, but his attachment to the cause of this country), and that he has done much public Business.

Upon the whole, I think it a new doctrine that a man sho'd be privileged because he is disowned by a people, for his complying with the Law of his country, and beg you will be kind enough, if you find his complaint reasonable, to see him justice done as far as possible.

I am, with real Esteem, Sir.

Your very H'bl.

Dan'l Heister, Jr.⁵

⁵ A Colonel of the First, later of the Fifth Battalion, Philadelphia county. He was an uncle of Joseph Hiester, governor of Pennsylvania, 1820-1823.

October 5, 1781

A letter from Daniel Heister, Jr. dated the 4th inst. representing a complaint of Henry Funck, against Frederick Limback, Esq. Sub-Lieutenant of the County of Northampton.

On consideration:

Ordered, that a copy of said letter be transmitted to Robert Levers, Esq. Lieutenant of said county, with a request that he will enquire into the case and make report thereon to Council.

Nov. 2, 1781.

A letter from Robert Levers, Esq. Lieutenant of the county of Northampton, of the 29th ulto. also respecting the case of Henry Funck and others was read, and thereupon Resolved, that the same be referred to a committee of three to act, Generals Potter, Lacey, and Ewing.⁶

We do not know how Henry Funk fared. But in 1786 he moved to Virginia where his descendants became active church workers.

The Funkites erected four known meetinghouses.⁷ One stood near Evansburg; Fricks' meetinghouse in Hatfield township; one on the Forty-foot road, near the Skippack creek, in Towamencin township; and one near the Lower Salford-Franconia township line on the Souderton-Harleysville pike near Harleysville, all in Montgomery county.

The Evansburg Funkite meetinghouse was probably built about 1815. It stood on the south side of the Germantown pike at the east end of Evansburg. Abraham Funk and wife deeded the lot to John Funk, minister and brother of Bishop Christian. But the deed was never recorded and is now lost. The tract consisted of eighty-five perches. About 1870 the old meetinghouse was torn down and the stones were used to build a wall around the little lot. About six years ago Rev. Frank S. Ballentine, a former Episcopal rector and translator of a modern English New Testament, purchased part of the tract for \$100. The Montgomery county court appointed Robert Trucksess a cotrustee of Joseph G. Gotwals the only survivor, to make this sale possible. The earliest burial in the lot was made in 1815. Most of the burials were made from 1815-1837. In 1936 the author drove to Evansburg to interview Rev. Ballentine and found a grave being prepared for the rector who had just died. The cemetery is in a poor condition. Very few legible markers remain. The most numerous burials were of the Gotwals family. Others buried there were of the following families, Croll, Detweiler, Funk, Keiter, and Rosenberger.

Fricks' burying ground is very old. In 1776 Jacob Shooter who had owned the farm for over twenty-five years, sold his land. In the deed the

⁶ These letters were furnished by Mr. Henry S. Landes of Souderton.

⁷ There may have been a Funkite meetinghouse near Fairview village, a few miles northwest of Norristown. The Dunkards at a later date possessed this meetinghouse. Today only the adjoining cemetery remains. See *History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, Lancaster, Pa., 1915, pp. 219, 230. The Dunkard history apparently fails to discuss the erection of the building, or how they came to possess it. The oldest legible tombstone is of 1809. Names found on the tombstones include, Baker, Bean, Cassel, Clemmer, Custer, Detweiler, Demuth, Dettra, Gotwals, Harley, Rittenhouse, Tyson, and Yost.

following reservation was made: "A small plott, between a small gutt and Beaver creek, is set aside as a burying ground, for the Society of Mennonites, with the privilege of a road along the line from the west corner of the farm to the burying ground."⁸ About 1812 a meetinghouse was erected at the south side of the cemetery. By the middle of the century the Funkites had deserted the building. About fifty-four years ago the present brick meetinghouse was rebuilt and is now used occasionally for funeral services. The only deed held by the trustees is one for 102 perches of land granted by Peter Frick on March 24, 1852. The last man to will money for the maintenance of the building and cemetery was David Rosenberger who bequeathed \$100 for that purpose in 1902. Probably about two hundred interments were made altogether. Among the surnames are Hoffman, Rosenberger, Funk, Detweiler, Trauger, Weierman, Frick, Zendt, Fisher, Hunsberger, Ruth, Gross, Folmer, Apple, Allebach, and Fretz.

The Funkite meetinghouse in Towamencin township was located near the Skippack Creek on the Forty-foot road. The first meetinghouse was erected in 1814 by Jacob Reiff on his own land. It was "a small building, slated on sides as well as roof, and 26 ft. by 35 ft. in dimensions."⁹ After Reiff's death in 1826 his son, John, owned the land and meetinghouse. John joined the Dunkard Church and so it became Dunkard property! About twenty years ago this building was torn down.

About 1814 or 1815 the Funkites erected a stone meetinghouse on the northwest side of the Souderton-Harleysville pike, near the line between the Lower Salford and Franconia townships. The meetinghouse was in Lower Salford township. The chief leader in causing this building to be erected was a Funkite preacher, Henry Landes. The meetinghouse was built on land owned by Jacob Moyer, a Funkite deacon, now the farm of Allen Clemmer. By 1855 the Funkite organization had become extinct. In that year some interested people tore down this meetinghouse and rebuilt it at Delp's burial ground where it still stands and is commonly known as the "Herrehouse." Incidentally Delp's burial ground is very old. Heckler says, "There is a stone there dated 1737."¹⁰

To return to the church organization. After 1783 there was no justification for a Funkite Church. No question existed as to who would win the war. Only one government called for allegiance. As long as Christian Funk lived his vigorous personality kept the church going. He himself mentions his brother, John, a minister, and John Detweiler, his son-in-law, a deacon. A number of others were also ordained. After his (Funk's) death the leadership of the Funkite Church fell on Bishop John Funk, but he was no leader. The group dwindled. The membership scattered; some became Herrites; some, Dunkards; and some, Mennonites. Heckler claims that the Funkites quarreled about John Herr the schismatic preacher of Lan-

⁸ Information furnished by Mr. Henry S. Landes.

⁹ Edward Mathews, *History of Towamencin Township*, Skippack, Pa., 1897, p. 6.

¹⁰ James Y. Heckler, *History of Lower Salford Township*, Harleysville, Pa., 1888, p. 26.

caster county, some defending and some opposing his doctrines.¹¹ By 1850 the Funkite organization had collapsed.

The English *Mirror for all Mankind* . . . , Norristown, Pa., 1814, includes a Preface signed by nine men, Henry Rosenberger, John Funk, John Reiff, Henry Gottwals, John Whisler, Christian Gottwals, Jacob Whisler, John Gottwals and George Schumacher. Heckler believes all these men were Funkite ministers. Jacob Detweiler (1778-1858) was a Funkite preacher. About 1822 he moved to Ontario where he served as a Mennonite minister. Deacon John Detweiler was buried at Delp's burial ground. At Evansburg are buried a Christian Gotwals (1779-1835); a Henry Gotwals (1774-1857), and a John Gotwals (1777-1823?).

The Funkite schism is most regrettable. Undoubtedly the Dunkards profited most by this Mennonite division. And there are always wounded feelings which are remembered for many years. John D. Souder often says that the Oberholtzer group was undoubtedly strengthened by some leaders of the Funk family leaving the Franconia Conference and uniting with Oberholtzer's Conference. Deacon John Funk Detweiler of Rockhill is an example.

¹¹ John Herr, a schismatic Mennonite of Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, began preaching in Montgomery county about 1820. He forbade listening to preachers of other denominations and extended the "ban" even to marital relations. See Part V, Chapter III, pages 388f.

Chapter II

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America is of sufficient extent to require a separate historical volume. Obviously this chapter can give but a mere sketch of the group. A word of explanation is also in order. Apart from the Funkites, and before 1847, this book deals with a people known simply as Mennonites. The district was often called Skippack because Skippack was a strong settlement and in early years it was the home of the leading men of the district. After the division of 1847 Mennonites of the main branch of the church, whose conference sessions continued to be held at Franconia, were often called Old Mennonites; while those adhering to the new conference of 1847 were called New Mennonites. These names did not especially please either group but they are still commonly used locally. Elsewhere in this book this latter conference is sometimes called Oberholtzer's Conference and sometimes the group is given its modern name, General Conference Mennonites. But strictly speaking there were no General Conference Mennonites before there was a General Conference. The General Conference of the New Mennonites was not organized until 1860. It is now called, "The General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America." Oberholtzer's Conference has been called the East Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference but the author failed to find a record of the adoption of this name prior to the formation of their General Conference. The early German broadsides of Oberholtzer's Conference sessions were entitled *Verhandlungen des Hohen Rathes der Mennoniten Gemeinschaft*.¹

Confusion is occasioned by the fact that many of the sister conferences of the Franconia Mennonite Conference organized the "Mennonite General Conference" in 1898. The Franconia Conference did not unite with the Mennonite General Conference but there is fellowship between the two bodies. Indeed one may well ask if one huge organization is essential to church unity and fellowship. This observation is no denial of the blessings brought by general conferences but perhaps it may cover a bit of the shame that peaceful Mennonites exist in so many separate organizations.

THE DIVISION OF 1847^{1a}

The causes which lead to divisions are often very complex. Personalities often enter the picture. Animosities are aroused which require many

¹ *Proceedings of the High Council of the Mennonite Society.*

^{1a} Besides various published sources of information Rev. A. M. Fretz kindly submitted a paper on the division and Rev. Freeman H. Swartz loaned the author the

years to overcome. May we "seek to bear [ourselves] toward each other with love," as the bishops wrote in 1773. A sincere effort has been made to write fairly and truthfully the story of the schism of 1847 though doubtless there are others who might not agree with the author's viewpoint or interpretation.

In December, 1838, Preacher John Z. Gehman of Hereford wrote in his German diary, "Christian Clemmer and Ephraim Hunsberger [are] opposed to Conference." Both Clemmer and Hunsberger were then laymen so it is not clear what regulations irked the young men. Preacher Clemmer united with the new conference in 1847 and Hunsberger was ordained by the new conference in 1849.

The underlying cause of the 1847 division was the conflicting attitudes of two groups in the Franconia Conference. In all churches various shades of opinion exist on many questions. Some people are of a conservative type of mind while others are more progressive. Within Scriptural bounds this is an ideal situation. Each side acts as a check on the other party. But when the same individuals are aligned against each other on almost every issue a party spirit is apt to develop. This is what happened in the Franconia Conference. One group was led by the senior bishop of the conference, John Hunsicker, supported by John H. Oberholtzer and others. They were opposed by a majority of conference members.

What were the issues? The late Henry A. Hunsicker, nephew of Bishop John, stated that one of the first questions which caused a division in thought was the 1834 School Law, in other words, education.² He says his father was also very active politically, even attending the "county conventions that framed the ticket." And when the old custom of using white covers on "dearborn" wagons was disturbed by the introduction of black oilcloth covers in some quarters, some people took offense at their Mennonite brethren who followed the change. But if these matters were issues, they were very trivial and did not lead to a church division. A more serious difference concerned the matter of suing at law. The majority party held that litigation was a downright violation of the New Testament ethic and was contrary to the historic practice of the church. But Oberholtzer later testified, "Our [new] conference was not opposed to go to law in a just cause."³ And then

English translation by N. B. Grubb of the Conference Minutes of what is now the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America. See also the Oberholtzer letter in the appendix of this volume. Dr. Bender purchased it in Germany in 1936, and translated it. It has hitherto not been published. It also appears, however, in the April, 1937, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. The author assumes all responsibility for the following interpretation of the division.

² See his account of the division in the 1907 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 20-24.

³ *Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Eastern District — January Term, 1883, . . . Berks County, Samuel H. Landis vs. Henry H. Borneman, Paper Book of Appellants . . .*, Reading, Pa., 1883, p. 23. This is the testimony heard in the Berks county court in the suit between the "Old" and "New" Mennonites for the Boyertown Church property. It is a most valuable source of history regarding the 1847 division.

there was the general attitude involved in one's attitude toward other denominations, toward marrying non-Mennonites, toward open communion, and the like. But the three points which constituted the immediate issues were, Oberholtzer's refusal to wear clerical garb, the refusal of conference to keep minutes, and the rejection by conference of Oberholtzer's Constitution.

Mennonite ministers and deacons of the Franconia Conference are expected to wear frock coats without lapels. Preacher Isaac F. Meyer testified about 1878, "This kind of coat was worn by all our preachers except Oberholtzer, and except the newly elected, who were allowed to wear out their old clothes."⁴ When Oberholtzer was ordained at Swamp in 1842 he resented any dictation regarding his attire. At the May, 1844 conference a resolution was passed that those refusing to conform to the usual garb would have no vote at conference. Oberholtzer and a few of his friends stayed away from the next few sessions. At the fall conference in 1845 a resolution was passed to adhere only "to all the rules and usages of the forefathers that are based on gospel truths." Oberholtzer and his friends then attended conference again. About a week before the May, 1847 conference Preacher Abraham Hunsicker of Skippack persuaded Oberholtzer to yield and buy a regulation coat. But by that time other issues prevented a reconciliation.

Preacher Isaac F. Meyer testified about 1878, "The first I recollect of Mr. Oberholtzer in the conference is that he wanted the proceedings of meeting put down in a book. No minutes of the proceedings of the conference had been kept before He thought it would be better to put down minutes; it would make matters more convenient. The old members thought this was something new and unnecessary; that they had the Bible and that was enough."⁵ The usual attitude, of course, is to smile at this viewpoint. But there was more common sense in the opinion of these brethren than many people recognize. Behind this statement of the "old members" (the author believes) there was a deep and worthy conviction that the best way for conference to function is to decide every issue, in the light of that particular situation, on Scriptural principles. To keep minutes would be to invite dissenters to constantly appeal to decisions made in similar cases years before. That is permissible in law courts but is not necessary among Christian brethren. The "old members" of ninety years ago occasionally had better judgment than some people do now. (Of course the author does not oppose keeping minutes.)

Isaac F. Meyer summed up the story when he testified, "The three causes which produced the division were the questions in reference to dress to the putting of the minutes of the conference on record, and the adoption of a written ordinance or constitution. The latter was the main trouble. There was nothing in the cut of the coat except that it showed disobedience."⁶ About New Year, 1847, Oberholtzer conceived the idea of writ-

⁴ *Paper Book of Appellants*, p. 24.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24. A secretary was finally appointed to keep minutes in 1909.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

ing a church constitution. Bishop John Hunsicker encouraged him. During the last week of April and the first week of May he performed the task. On May 6, 1847 Bishop Hunsicker held a meeting of seven ministers (besides himself) and five deacons in the Skippack meetinghouse. This group was the nucleus of the new conference. These thirteen officials subscribed to Oberholtzer's Constitution. The next day Oberholtzer presented himself in his new (clerical) coat and with his "constitutional documents" at the Franconia Conference and asked to read the Constitution. His proposal was voted down. He then asked for permission to print the document so every member could examine it. This was also refused, but he printed it without permission. By the time of the fall conference (October 7, 1847) three more deacons had subscribed to the Constitution. At the fall conference Bishop Hunsicker and the Oberholtzer party sat apart as a group and Bishop Henry Hunsberger of Blooming Glen presided over the conference. A great many laymen were present. During the session, after being disfranchised, the Oberholtzer party walked out.

The case here is similar to the one regarding the keeping of minutes. The Franconia Conference has been severely criticized for rejecting Oberholtzer's Constitution without even giving him a hearing. It may be that by 1847 Oberholtzer had aroused considerable personal ill will so that the fact that he was the author was sufficient to spell defeat for his Constitution. But making due allowance for "party spirit" as Bishop Hunsicker called it, there is a defensible interpretation of the action of the Franconia Conference. In 1773 the bishops wrote, "With regard to our confession of faith, our forefathers have taken the articles adopted on the 21st of April, 1632, at Dortrecht, in Holland, and outside of these we have held to no human regulations, but have taught simply those of the Holy Scriptures and what may further God's honor and man's happiness." And it may be observed that the Dortrecht Confession has been used only as a suitable expression of Christian doctrine, especially being used to teach converts. The Mennonite Church is not a creedal church. The Bible is the book of appeal! So when Oberholtzer presented a church constitution,—no, no! That was utterly un-Mennonite! Worldly organizations need man-made constitutions but the Lord of the Church has provided a sufficient "constitution" for His subjects in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the Gospels. That is what the bishops meant when they wrote in 1773, ". . . we recognize the Holy Scriptures, especially the Evangelists, for our chief rule."

There were also specific points in the Constitution which displeased the Franconia Mennonites. Preacher Henry Nice evidently sent a copy of the document to four bishops and two ministers of the Lancaster Conference.^{6a} A letter headed, "West Lampeter Township, Lancaster County, Pa., August 29, 1847" was sent to Nice^{6b} and signed by, "Christⁿ Herr (Pequea), Jacob Hochstetter, Christian Bamberger, Henrich Schenck, Marten Mayer

^{6a} These officials are so classified in a document cited under, "Deep Run," p. 363.

^{6b} A typewritten (German) copy of this letter is in the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania.

and Benj^a Herr." They opposed the following points in his constitution: electing a conference moderator and secretary; taking only the two highest ministerial nominees through the lot; giving ministers financial support; allowing an appeal to law and condoning marriage with non-Mennonites. They also complained about receiving non-Mennonites into the church without rebaptism in case they were baptized as infants,—but on this point either the Lancaster brethren misunderstood the Constitution or the present author misunderstood their (German) letter.

To return to the Oberholtzer faction: on October 28, 1847 six ministers and five deacons met in the (Lower) Skippack Mennonite meetinghouse and organized a new conference. Abraham Hunsicker was chairman of the meeting and John H. Oberholtzer, secretary. Those present at this important meeting were, Bishop John Hunsicker of Skippack; Preachers William Landis of Saucon, J. H. Oberholtzer of Swamp, Abraham Hunsicker of Skippack, Christian Clemmer of Hereford and Joseph Schantz⁷ of Upper Milford; Deacons William Gottshall of Schwenksville, John Detweiler of Rockhill, Henry B. Shelly of Swamp (?), Jacob Benner of Flatland, and Samuel Kaufman of Upper Milford. The Conference has met semiannually in various meetinghouses since that time.^{7a} Minutes have been carefully recorded since 1847.⁸

Both sides made overtures which the other party rejected. For example Henry Hunsberger, Isaac Gottshall and John Geil sent notice to the new conference, "Resolved by the assembled Conference that if the brethren who have subscribed to the book, Constitution of the Mennonite Society, appear and declare it to be out of harmony with the old evangelical order of the Churches over whom they have been placed as ministers and bring with them a minister or reliable brother as witness and confess to the above they will be accepted in love." The Oberholtzer faction made no response.

A rather thorough investigation of the Oberholtzer schism was made about 1878 when the "Old" and "New" Mennonites became involved in litigation over property rights at Boyertown. The Master who was appointed by the Berks county court to hear the testimony, reported:^{8a}

" . . . From the testimony of Isaac Moyer, who had been a minister of the Mennonite church for over forty years, it would appear that the conference consisted of the ministers, about forty in number, attached to the different churches, besides the five bishops, each of whom had charge of from three to five congregations; and the deacons, generally two from each church, who were elected by their respective congregations

⁷ For some reason the (English) conference minutes omit his name.

^{7a} Only annually since 1899.

⁸ An English translation of these German records from 1847 to 1902 was made by Rev. N. B. Grubb. Rev. Freeman H. Swartz, 1936 moderator of the Eastern District Conference, kindly loaned the author a copy.

^{8a} *Supreme Court . . . , Appeal, Samuel H. Landis, et al, vs. Henry H. Borne-man, Sr., et al, p. XIII.*

"In 1847, and previously, the conference represented twenty-two distinct societies, to wit: two in Lehigh,^{8b} two in Chester,^{8c} seven in Montgomery,^{8d} nine in Bucks,^{8e} and two in Berks, to wit: those of Boyertown and Hereford"

In an "Answer To Bill" the defendants ("Old" Mennonites) stated:^{8f}

" . . . when the May session of that year [1847] opened, two members of the conference, Rev. John H. Overholtzer and John Hunsinger [Hunsicker] started a new movement The proposition was rejected by a majority, only sixteen out of about seventy members voting in its favor"

Evidently the Franconia Conference in 1847 was composed of about five bishops, forty ministers, and twenty-five deacons. These men were serving in twenty-two^{8g} congregations. Today (1937) the Franconia Conference is composed of seventeen congregations: one in Chester^{8h} county, seven in Bucks,⁸ⁱ eight in Montgomery,^{8j} and one (Hereford-Boyertown) in Berks. Five bishops serve in these congregations, thirty-two ministers and eighteen deacons. The total membership of the seventeen congregations is about 4,200.

Of the seventy ministers and deacons in 1847, sixteen withdrew and organized a new conference.^{8k} The new conference claimed six meeting-houses: Upper Milford, Schwenksville, Skippack, East Swamp, West Swamp, and Flatland. At the following seven places both groups worshiped on alternate Sundays for a number of years: Saucon, Springfield,^{8l} Providence, Worcester, Hereford, Boyertown, and Rockhill. The "Old" Mennonites erected new Swamp and Skippack meetinghouses and the "New" Mennonites erected a new meetinghouse at Deep Run, and within a few years a new Hereford meetinghouse. They also revived or freshly organized work at several places; e. g., Phoenixville and Bertolets'.

The "New" Mennonite Conference consists (1935) of twenty-five congregations, more widely scattered than those of the Franconia Confer-

^{8b} Saucon and Upper Milford.

^{8c} Vincent and Coventry.

^{8d} Franconia, Plain, Providence, Salford, Skippack, Towamencin, and Worcester.

^{8e} Blooming Glen, Deep Run, Doylestown, Lexington, Rockhill, Springfield, East Swamp, West Swamp and Flatland.

^{8f} *Supreme Court*, p. 6.

^{8g} One could have considered the congregations as twenty-one. Hereford-Boyertown is one congregation. Plumstead was counted a part of Deep Run.

^{8h} Vincent.

⁸ⁱ Blooming Glen-Perkasie, Deep Run-Plumstead, Doylestown, Lexington, Rockhill, Springfield, and Swamp.

^{8j} Franconia, Plain, Providence, Salford, Souderton, Upper Skippack, Towamencin, and Worcester.

^{8k} One cannot estimate accurately how many laymen seceded from the Franconia Conference; a rough estimate is one fourth—perhaps 500 baptized members.

^{8l} Both groups still use the Springfield meetinghouse on alternate Sundays. The "Johnson" Mennonites are also still using the Providence and Worcester meetinghouses.

ence. Besides the congregations in the area covered by the Franconia Conference the "New" Mennonites have congregations in Allentown, in Lancaster county, and in central Pennsylvania. Twenty-two pastors care for these congregations. The conference also has about eight ministers without regular charges, and one pastor emeritus.

The new conference was very active. Men were ordained and various activities were soon started. Besides reprinting catechisms, conference minutes, and his constitution, Oberholtzer established a German paper (bi-weekly), the *Religiöser Botschafter* in 1852.⁹ The periodical received conference approval in 1853. In 1856 the name was changed to *Das Christliche Volksblatt*. In 1867 this paper was succeeded by the *Friedensbote* which in 1882 was merged with a Russian Mennonite periodical, *Zur Heimath*, to form the *Bundesbote*. Oberholtzer also defended himself, writing a book in German, *The True Character of J. H. Oberholtzer*, 1860. In 1876 John G. Stauffer, a member of the new group, founded *Das Himmelsmanna*, an undenominational paper which continued for thirty years. In 1885 Stauffer started a monthly periodical, *Die Kirche Unterm Kreuz*. In the same year N. B. Grubb and A. M. Fretz, two strong leaders, established *The Mennonite* "under the authorization of the Eastern District Conference."

In reading through the conference minutes one notes various steps. In 1851 the observance of foot washing was encouraged, but in less than a decade it was declared unnecessary. Prayer meetings were approved in 1853 and disapproved in 1858. A Sunday school was organized at West Swamp in 1858. In the same year conference instructed Oberholtzer to write to the European Mennonites to learn what mission work they were supporting. In 1850 conference decided that members of secret orders were barred from partaking of the Lord's Supper but the same year this rule was moderated. In 1863 Conference ". . . recommended that the next General Conference begin the establishment of a school with prayerful thought." A school was established at Wadsworth, Ohio, in 1866. In 1870 conference declared it ". . . a duty for the congregation to pay its ministers who preach the Word according to their needs." It was not until 1881 that a stated salary was discussed and then it was left optional, to be decided upon by the minister and his congregation. In 1896 the Frederick Institute building at Frederick, Pennsylvania, was purchased and converted into a home for the aged.

Doctrinally the General Conference Mennonites claim to have remained on the old foundation. This is probably true on the cardinal points of theology, but the author was disappointed to learn that during the Civil War their conference "decided, it would be best to refrain from action at this date . . . when members of congregations bear arms each congregation is to handle such brother according to circumstances . . ."^{9a} And no discipline was exercised over any one for bearing arms during the

⁹ Harold S. Bender, *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature, 1727-1928*, Goshen, Indiana, 1929, has proved of invaluable assistance in this and other chapters.

^{9a} English translation by Rev. Grubb of conference minutes.

World War. "Conference, however, wisely refrained from calling any one to account for what had been done under the painful stress of war conditions, through which our country, we with the rest, had passed."¹⁰ Conference continues to stand for nonresistance but apparently one's church standing is not lost if he takes up arms. Nor does membership in secret orders prohibit one from the Lord's Supper. Discipline has been reduced to a minimum. It is one of the greatest points of difference between the "New" and the "Old Mennonites."

As was stated above, the General Conference Mennonites teach the same doctrines as their ancestors. The Confession of Faith drawn up by Cornelis Ris of Hoorn, Holland, in 1766 is generally used. It is a well-written statement of thirty-six articles.

In religious practice the Oberholtzer group has made many changes in the last ninety years. There is no religious garb. The devotional covering (based on I Corinthians 11:2-16) has been discarded. Trained ministers occupy their pulpits and receive salaries. Musical instruments are used in the church and Sunday-school services. The singing is now led by choirs. No rules are laid down for the conduct of members, such as forbidding attendance at theaters. In general outward forms and regulations have been abandoned and much of what the "Old" Mennonites would consider worldliness is tolerated.

In Part II of this book all congregational histories were traced as far as to 1847. Brief sketches will now be given of the Mennonite congregations of the Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonite Church since 1847.¹¹

LOWER SKIPPACK

Skippack Township, Montgomery County

The Oberholtzer party retained possession of the Skippack meeting-house in the division of 1847, now called "Lower Skippack." By 1851 there was disharmony in the Lower Skippack congregation. The congregation and conference agreed to the appointment of a committee to advise in the situation. The committee consisted of Preachers Samuel Weinberger, Jacob Button, John H. Oberholtzer, Joseph Schantz, and William Gehman; and Deacons John Detweiler and Henry B. Shelly.¹² The committee found Preacher Abraham Grater in error and also confirmed the action of the congregation against Bishop Abraham Hunsicker. Abraham Hunsicker, his son Henry A. Hunsicker, Israel Beidler and Abraham H. Grater thereafter constituted an independent group. They are designated in this book as the

¹⁰ 1922 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 27. Yet there were a number of conscientious objectors from the Eastern District Conference during the World War. The following were at Camp Meade: Oscar S. Beahm, Henry M. Clemmer, John G. Geissinger, Eugene Landis, William D. Moyer, Francis C. Bechtle, Charles K. Kilmer, and Robert S. Stauffer. Undoubtedly there were others at other camps.

¹¹ Of course this treatment is very inadequate. But it is hoped that this will be of some slight assistance to future historians.

¹² Conference minutes.

Hunsicker Group. These four men were too liberal in their views for the Oberholtzer Mennonites. The main point of contention seems to have been secret orders. In 1850 conference passed a strict regulation against lodge membership. This was moderated, probably in an effort to maintain unity, the same year. These four ministers, nevertheless, became independent.

But still the trouble was not settled. It was also probably in an effort to maintain unity that conference in 1851 encouraged the observance of foot washing. This was strongly advocated by Preacher Henry G. Johnson of Skippack. But two years later conference urged toleration on the matter. Discontent persisted at Skippack. Part of the trouble was personal disagreements between Preachers David Bergey and Henry G. Johnson. After several successive sessions, conference decided against the observance of foot washing. Johnson no longer attended conference. In 1859 conference declared he was out of order. In 1861 conference formally expelled Johnson. He carried a large part of his congregation with him and the group has since received the name "Johnson Mennonites." They are not affiliated either with the Franconia Conference or the Eastern District Conference. They have retained the old Lower Skippack meetinghouse.

In 1860 Preacher David Bergey's ministry was recognized by conference. He was pastor of a small part of the Lower Skippack congregation. By 1867 there was also trouble between Bergey and Bishop Moses Gottshall, but after some time this difficulty was adjusted. Bergey and his congregation met for services in a building at Skippack. But the group finally disintegrated and in 1886 Conference declared their work at Skippack abandoned.

Following is a list of ministers ordained at Lower Skippack, regardless of their affiliations later. Abraham Hunsicker was ordained bishop in 1847. On December 2 of that year Henry G. Johnson was ordained preacher. On December 1, 1852 he was ordained bishop. Abraham Grater and Henry A. Hunsicker were both ordained preachers on January 1, 1850. David Bergey was ordained preacher in 1852 and chosen bishop in 1868.

THE JOHNSON MENNONITES

This group is independent but its history is logically inserted at this point. Christian Detweiler was ordained preacher in 1861 but he soon died. Joel Rosenberger was ordained to the ministry in 1864 but he soon became an Evangelical Mennonite. Amos K. Bean was ordained preacher on August 30, 1873 and bishop in 1875. Henry H. Johnson was chosen minister on March 30, 1878. Peter A. Metz was ordained deacon on May 13, 1899 and minister on June 29, 1912. The present minister, Henry M. Johnson, son of Henry H., and grandson of Henry G., was ordained on April 25, 1915.

Six deacons have served the Lower Skippack congregation. John G. Hunsicker was ordained on February 23, 1850. Elias Grater was chosen on April 15, 1856. On November 24, 1883 Garret Allebach was ordained. On May 13, 1899 Peter A. Metz was ordained. About 1914 Andrew T. Grater was chosen. Elwood H. Heacock was ordained on April 23, 1921.

The pastor states that a Sunday school was organized at Lower Skip-pack about 1858. In 1934 a young people's meeting was organized. In 1927 a Home Mission Committee was chosen. The present membership of the congregation is about three hundred. Foot washing is observed. No religious garb is required but some women still wear bonnets. The minister wears an ordinary sack coat with a lapel.

In 1912 the interior of the building was completely remodeled and a heater was installed in the basement.

THE HUNSICKER GROUP

In 1851 Bishop Abraham Hunsicker, Preacher Henry A. Hunsicker, Preacher Abraham H. Grater and Bishop Israel Beidler separated from Oberholtzer's Conference. ". . . but having a majority of the members and friends, both in Phoenixville and in Germantown to stand by us, we continued our services at both these places until 1875. After the Meeting Houses in Skippack and Providence were closed against us, we held services at school houses, and in some of the neighboring churches opened to us, until 1854 when we built a church at Freeland, now Collegeville, which was essentially a non-sectarian church, to be open for ministers in good standing in our own and other denominations, who chose to help the church of Christ. Our Church, as well as our school,¹³ were both flourishing. We added to the Ministry during these years, Francis Hunsicker, Jarret T. Preston, and Joseph H. Hendricks."¹⁴

The church established by the Hunsicker group in 1854 was called the "Trinity Christian Society." In 1888 Hendricks and his church were received into the Reformed Church, which act displeased Henry A. Hunsicker.

The Hunsicker group were for a time known as Reformed Mennonites, at least they were called Reformed Mennonites at Germantown. But this name was already used by a radical sect of Mennonites in Lancaster county, the followers of John Herr, and the "Reformed" Mennonites of Germantown soon became General Conference Mennonites. Indeed the whole Hunsicker group disintegrated. The Collegeville Church became Reformed; the Lutherans acquired the Phoenixville property and the Germantown Church united with the Eastern District of the General Conference Mennonites. Both Henry A. and Francis R. S. Hunsicker became Presbyterians.

BERTOLETS'

Frederick Township, Montgomery County

The meetinghouse erected in 1846-47 is still standing. A union Sunday school was opened in Bertolets' meetinghouse in 1848. This is probably the first Sunday school in a Mennonite meetinghouse in southeastern Pennsylvania. But it was not a denominational organization. Pastors at Bertolets'

¹³ Freeland Seminary was founded by Bishop Abraham Hunsicker in 1848. Henry A. Hunsicker was the first principal. The school became Ursinus College in 1869.

¹⁴ Henry A. Hunsicker, 1907 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 24.

were Abraham Hunsicker, 1847; Moses H. Gottshall, 1848-1872; N. B. Grubb, 1872-1882; William S. Gottshall, 1884-1905; John W. Shantz, 1907-1916; and W. H. Grubb. Regular services have not been held at Bertolets' meetinghouse for about fifteen years.

EDEN

Schwenksville, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

The Mennonite congregation at Schwenksville has been known by various names, Zieglers', Mine Hill, Gottshalls', and Eden. Eden is the present name of the congregation.

The congregation was formally organized on October 28, 1847 with thirty members. On December 3 of that year Moses H. Gottshall was ordained to the ministry and about three years later was ordained bishop. In 1868 Samuel H. Longaker was ordained to the ministry by lot but in a few years he asked leave to quit preaching. N. B. Grubb was ordained on June 30, 1872. On October 15, 1884 William, son of Bishop Moses Gottshall, was ordained to the ministry. John W. Schantz was ordained preacher on June 20, 1907. After his death in 1916 R. F. Landis served as supply pastor until W. H. Grubb began his work as pastor on December 2, 1917. Freeman H. Swartz was ordained on October 16, 1921 and is still serving.

The 1818 stone meetinghouse was displaced by a new brick building in 1851. In 1894 the present building was erected in the present borough of Schwenksville at a cost of \$5,300. The 1851 meetinghouse is no longer standing.

A Sunday school was organized in 1851 but opposition forced the school to close. In 1867 a second, and this time successful, effort was made to start a Sunday school. A mission society was organized about 1904. In time the mission society evolved into a Christian Endeavor Society.¹⁵

The present membership of the Eden Church is 246; in 1895 it was 171.^{15a}

DEEP RUN

Bedminster Township, Bucks County

At the time of the division of 1847 all the ordained men at Deep Run remained a part of the Franconia Conference, but a portion of the congregation withdrew and united with Oberholtzer's group. The new congregation offered several propositions¹⁶ to the Deep Run Mennonites, such as that the two congregations should occupy the meetinghouse on alternate

¹⁵ M. C. Gottshall in, *Church and Home*, 1916, May, June, July, August, and September issues. The periodical was then edited by the pastor of the Souderton, Schwenksville, and Bertolets' Mennonite Churches; now, by the Eden pastor.

^{15a} In the minutes of Oberholtzer's Conference there is a statement of the membership of the several congregations in 1895.

¹⁶ A copy of these propositions is in the notebook of Deacon Abraham Wismer (1791-1859). This is now in the possession of Harvey Wismer of Plumsteadville who kindly loaned it to the author.

Sundays, or that the meetinghouse should be sold at a public auction, etc. But the (Franconia Conference) Deep Run congregation quietly turned down such suggestions and went ahead holding church services every Sunday.¹⁷

On December 15, 1848 the new congregation applied to the Bucks County Court for a charter. This brought forth a remonstrance¹⁸ from the Old Mennonites at Deep Run. This protest was addressed "To the Hon. the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Bucks." The New Mennonite petitioners are charged with either having been expelled from the Old congregation, or having withdrawn, or having never been members. They also charge the New Mennonites with having made several efforts to obtain possession of the Deep Run meetinghouse. ". . . in this however they have not Succeeded the old Society¹⁹ Assembling their [sic] Upon every Sabbathday for worship" The Old Mennonites feared the New "Society" were desirous of being incorporated to gain the real estate owned by the Deep Run Church. The protest continued by informing the court that "their new Church discipline was forwarded to four Bishop and two Ministers of the Lancaster Conference who unanimously condemned it as at variance with the long acknowledged principles of the menonite church" Nevertheless they are permitted to bury in the old cemetery! "The membership of this new sect in proportion to the old²⁰ is about as 60 is to two hundred." The protest was "Signed by the Ministers and Elders²¹ of the Mennonite Society of Deep Run and Plumstead in behalf of Said Society—

Bishop	Isaac Godshalk
	Christian Gross
Ministers	Abraham Meyer
	Isaac Meyer
Elders	Abraham Wismer
	Samuel Shelly"

On April 25, 1849 the court nevertheless granted a charter to the new "Mennonite Society of Deep Run and Plumstead."

After being refused the use of the old meetinghouse the New Mennonite trustees bought two and one-half acres of land from Henry Myers and on it erected a brick meetinghouse. Services were held in the new building for the first time on December 1, 1849.²²

¹⁷ They mention this weekly service in another statement also copied in Deacon Wismer's book. Wismer also obtained legal advice for he records the payment of ". . . five dollars unto John L. Delp Lawer fees about the Meeting house Difficulty. . . ."

¹⁸ Also copied in Wismer's book.

¹⁹ Their thinking was in German. They thought of their congregation as a *Gemeinschaft*.

²⁰ Evidently at Deep Run.

²¹ Deacons.

²² See the historical sketch in the *1899 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 26, 27.

Prior to 1856 the New Mennonites used the old cemetery, after that, they buried in a new one of their own.

The two meetinghouses are only a few hundred yards apart. To show how unrestricted they were the new congregation built an unusually high pulpit in their church. When Allen M. Fretz became pastor (1883) he asked to be able to stand "nearer on a level with his parishioners" and the pulpit was lowered.²³

Martin Fretz was the first minister of the new congregation, but he soon forsook his charge, moving to New Jersey in 1851. Enos F. Loux and Joseph D. Rosenberger then were ordained. However, Loucks, after a time seldom preached, and Rosenberger joined the Old Mennonite Church as a layman in 1870. A year or two later Jacob S. Moyer, a Springfield preacher (who had studied at the school at Wadsworth, Ohio) was elected pastor at Deep Run. On October 13, 1883 Allen M. Fretz was chosen and is still serving—a beloved and influential minister.

The first deacon was William Myers. In 1879 Aaron M. Rickert was ordained. Samuel Gross was elected deacon for three years in 1899 and has been repeatedly re-elected since that time. In 1935 Levi S. Moyer was elected assistant deacon for one year.

A Sunday school was organized in the early history of the congregation but was later discontinued. By 1876 it was revived. In 1892 a Young People's Christian Association was organized.²⁴

Services were conducted every two weeks prior to 1883, and in the German language. In 1883 Rev. Fretz began to preach every Sunday and to use the English language in part. Regular German services were discontinued in 1910.

The present membership of the Deep Run Church is 217. In 1895 the membership was 167.

BRANCH

West Rockhill Township, Bucks County

When the division of 1847 occurred Deacon John F. Detweiler (d. 1864) of Rockhill united with Oberholtzer's Conference. As late as 1851 he was still in that conference for he served on the committee to adjust matters at Lower Skippack. However he later returned to the Franconia Conference.²⁵

Detweiler carried a group with him from the Rockhill congregation into Oberholtzer's Conference. This new Rockhill congregation was called the Branch Church.²⁶ Strangely enough some of the documents of the Branch Church are in the possession of the present Rockhill trustees (of

²³ See Rev. Fretz's "Reminiscences. . .," *1932 Year Book of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of N. A.*, pp. 31, 32.

²⁴ *1898 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 33.

²⁵ Testimony of Preacher Isaac Meyer of Deep Run in the Boyertown Church-property lawsuit. Supreme Court . . . 1883, *Book of Appellants*. p. 25.

²⁶ The minutes of Oberholtzer's Conference often refer to it.

the Franconia Conference). One of these papers is dated June 27, 1848 and on it there is recorded in German script that on that date trustees for "the church and meetinghouse under John Detweiler,"²⁷ were elected as follows: Jacob Button, John D. Detweiler, and Isaac Clemmer. These trustees chose Button as treasurer. On June 9, 1857 the church again chose three trustees: John D. Detweiler, Jacob Stauffer, and John Yoder. Stauffer was then chosen treasurer by the trustees. The tally sheets for these elections (?) have also been found. The other nominees in 1848 were Peter Roth and Samuel Detweiler; in 1851 they were William Rosenbe[rger], Samuel Detweiler, and Peter Roth.²⁸

By 1851 both J. Samuel Weinberger and Jacob Button were ordained to the ministry for in that year the conference minutes list them both as ministers who served the committee to investigate the Lower Skippack church situation. Button was a farmer and notary public ("squire"). After some years he was removed from office; he united with the Blooming Glen congregation of the Franconia Conference as a layman. Weinberger also seems to have been removed from office.²⁹ Preacher David Bergey of Skippack then supplied the Rockhill pulpit.

It is not known when Deacon John Detweiler returned to the Franconia Conference. But in 1866, "Nathan Bach, the newly elected deacon of the Branch congregation was received as a member of the Council."³⁰ The next, and last, Branch deacon was John D. Detweiler who was received as a member of conference in 1873.

But Branch did not thrive. In 1882 the report given at conference stated that at Branch there was "only a small congregation and as before served by Bro. Bergey." In 1883 L. O. Schimmel was preaching at Branch every four weeks. At the May, 1884, conference "L. O. Schimmel reported to the Home Mission Committee that he did not have the pleasure as formerly to preach at the Branch and that the members there have decided to omit services for the present."³⁰ That was the end of Branch. But Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, was organized in 1893 with a number of former Branch communicants as charter members.

HEREFORD

Bally, Berks County, Pennsylvania

At the time of the 1847 division there were three ordained men at Hereford: Preachers John Z. Gehman, Christian Clemmer, and John Bow-

²⁷ "Ueber die Kemeinte und Das Versamlungs Haus under dem Johannes Detweiler"

²⁸ The sheets are not dated but the men with the highest votes are the ones elsewhere declared elected.

²⁹ The last reference in the conference minutes to Weinberger is in 1857; he then served as conference secretary. The late Samuel Landis of South Perkasio reported to John D. Souder that Weinberger "did not die in office."

³⁰ Conference minutes.

See the 1899 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac* pp. 29-31; also the 1914 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 29-32.

man. Clemmer became a charter member of Oberholtzer's Conference and Bowman united the next year. Ephraim Hunsberger was ordained minister by lot in the new congregation on October 18, 1849.³¹ In 1852 he decided to move to Medina county, Ohio. Before leaving, on October 10, 1852, he was ordained bishop. In 1853 Samuel Clemmer was ordained preacher to succeed Hunsberger. In 1868 he accepted the call of the Philadelphia congregation and became pastor there. Abraham Gottshall was ordained to the ministry at Hereford in 1870. In 1886 Gottshall accepted the call of the Boyertown congregation to become its pastor. C. H. A. van der Smissen served the Hereford congregation as its pastor from 1885 to 1890. A. S. Shelly succeeded van der Smissen. The present pastor is a Schwenkfelder, Dr. E. E. S. Johnson, Professor of Modern Church History in Hartford Theological Seminary, Connecticut.

From 1847 to 1900 three men served as deacons of the Hereford (General Conference) Mennonite Church: John Bowman, John H. Funk, and James B. Funk. A John Bowman (Bauman) died in 1883; John H. Funk (1824-1884) served 17 years as deacon and then united with the Evangelical Association. James B. Funk was ordained in 1880.³¹

The new congregation alternated with the old congregation in the use of the historic Hereford meetinghouse from 1847 to 1851. In 1850 the new congregation decided to erect a new meetinghouse; the building was ready for use in 1851. The two meetinghouses are only a few hundred feet apart. The new congregation sold out its interest in the old meetinghouse for \$75. The new building was partly rebuilt and Sunday-school rooms were added in 1897. A Sunday school was organized in 1870.

The Hereford Christian Endeavor Society was organized on January 15, 1887. In 1895 a Junior C. E. Society was organized.

The present membership of the Hereford congregation is 246; in 1895 it was 202.

MENNO SIMONS'

Boyertown, Berks County, Pennsylvania

The Boyertown meetinghouse was originally erected for the convenience of the Hereford Mennonites in and near Boyertown. There was no separate pastor for the Boyertown Mennonite Church before the division of 1847 and for some time thereafter. Christian Clemmer preached both at Hereford and Boyertown until his death in 1883. In 1886 Abraham Gottshall became pastor at Boyertown.³¹ He was succeeded by Moses H. Gottshall, William S. Gottshall, Harvey Clymer, Harvey G. Allebach, A. S. Shelly, D. J. Brand, and E. S. Shelly.

Roth the Franconia Conference congregation at Boyertown and the Oberholtzer congregation continued to use the old meetinghouse for many years after the division of 1847. In 1876 the Franconia Conference congregation at Boyertown decided to erect a new meetinghouse. The new congregation was not satisfied with the terms offered them by the other group.

³¹ See the *1899 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 29-31; also the *1914 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 29-32.

There was a lawsuit which was settled in the 1883 Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.³² The Franconia Conference congregation was given the meetinghouse, and proceeded to complete the construction. The General Conference Mennonite congregation at Boyertown then erected the "Menno Simons' Mennonite Church" on Fourth Street, Boyertown.

In 1895 the membership of "Menno Simons' Mennonite Church" was 52. Today its membership is 54.

EAST SWAMP

Milford Township, Bucks County

The old East Swamp meetinghouse was claimed by the Oberholtzer group in the division of 1847. Three years later the present meetinghouse was erected.³³

East and West Swamp were served by the same ministers until about 1906. The ministers who thus served were John H. Oberholtzer, William N. Shelly, Levi O. Schimmel, Andrew B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer, and Harvey S. Gottshall. From 1906 to 1925 the pulpit was supplied for longer or shorter periods by W. S. Gottshall, Warren S. Shelly, W. H. Grubb, Harvey Shelly, Victor B. Boyer, Harvey G. Allebach, Joseph Hagenbuch, R. F. Landis, G. T. Soldner, and Freeman H. Swartz. In 1925 Howard G. Nyce became the regular pastor. After he left in 1929 William H. Rivell supplied the pulpit until the present pastor, William S. Gottshall, was installed.

In 1895 the membership of the East Swamp congregation was 106; today it is 217.

WEST SWAMP

Milford Township, Bucks County

The old West Swamp meetinghouse became the property of the Oberholtzer group in the division of 1847. The present stone meetinghouse, 45 ft. by 60 ft., was erected in 1873. Until 1906 the same ministers served both East and West Swamp. The present pastor of West Swamp is A. J. Neuenschwander.

In 1847 John H. Oberholtzer began to organize the young people of the West Swamp Church into classes for Biblical instruction.³⁴ He used a catechism as the basis of his teaching. These were known as *Kinderlehre* meetings. The exercises consisted of singing, prayer, reading, and explaining the questions and answers of the catechism. After some years these meetings were discontinued. On May 2, 1858 a Sunday school was organized in the West Swamp Mennonite Church with A. B. Shelly as superin-

³² See the *Paper Book of Appellants, Samuel H. Landis . . . , vs. Henry H. Borneman . . . , Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Eastern District—January Term, 1883*. Reading, Pa., 1883.

³³ See the *1898 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 26-27. The date there given is 1750. But the first meetinghouse was erected in 1771.

³⁴ See the *1934 Year Book of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of N. A.*, pp. 19-22.

tendent. About four years later a teachers' meeting was organized. A Young People's Christian Association was organized in 1892.

In 1895 the membership of the church was 197; today it is 193.

FLATLAND

Richland Township, Bucks County

The 1837 building, the first one erected at Flatland, near Quakertown, is still in use. For many years after the division of 1847 the Flatland pulpit was supplied by the ministers of the Swamp churches. The present pastor is A. J. Neuenschwander, who also preaches at West Swamp.

Perhaps soon after the organization of the West Swamp Sunday School a Sunday school was organized at Flatland. After some years it was discontinued. Later it was again revived.

In 1895 the Flatland Church membership was 39; today it is 53.

SAUCON

Coopersburg, Lehigh County, Pa.

The building erected by the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference is still standing but is in the possession of the General Conference Mennonites. Ministers of the General Conference Mennonites who preached at Saucon since 1847 are J. H. Oberholtzer, Samuel Moyer, Christian Clemmer, Abraham H. Gottshall, A. B. Shelly, Linford Foulke, and E. S. Shelly, the present pastor.

In 1895 the membership was 25; today it is 44.

SPRINGFIELD³⁵

Springfield Township, Bucks County

The present Springfield Mennonite meetinghouse, erected in 1824, is used by both the Franconia Conference and the General Conference Mennonites, on alternate Sundays. Preacher Samuel Moyer served the General Conference congregation at Springfield for a number of years but about 1861 he returned to the Franconia Conference as a minister. In 1849 John Geisinger was ordained to the ministry. Samuel Moyer (not the one just mentioned) was ordained in 1851. His son, Jacob S. Moyer, was ordained in 1871. In 1907 Frank F. Gabel was elected pastor but resigned in 1913. Allen M. Fretz took over the pastorate in 1914 and is still serving.

John Schimmel was ordained deacon in 1857. In 1860 his son, Elam O. Schimmel, succeeded him. Peter A. Moyer was elected deacon in 1867. John O. Schimmel, brother of Elam O., was elected in 1893. In 1903 Jacob M. Landis was ordained deacon.

³⁵ Rev. Allen M. Fretz kindly submitted a paper on the history of the Springfield Mennonite Church. Rev. Fretz is almost eighty-three years of age and is still carrying a heavy ministerial load.

The General Conference Mennonite Sunday School superintendent at Springfield also serves as superintendent of the Franconia Conference Mennonite Sunday School there,—Ely R. Fretz.

In 1895 the Springfield (General Conference) membership was 74; today it is 36.

UPPER MILFORD

Zionsville, Lehigh County, Pa.

In the division of 1847 the active young minister of the Upper Milford congregation, Joseph Schantz, stood by Oberholtzer and carried his congregation with him into the new conference.³⁶

The old meetinghouse was replaced by the present brick structure in 1876. Joseph Schantz preached until his death in 1881. In 1849 William Gehman was ordained to the ministry by lot. A few years later he was the leader of another division. In 1874 the congregation called Uriah Shelly, a graduate of Wadsworth (Ohio) Seminary, as pastor. After a few years of preaching he was forced to stop due to a throat difficulty. After the death of Joseph Schantz, C. H. A. van der Smissen became pastor. In 1890 van der Smissen accepted a call to a pastorate at Summerfield, Illinois. Anthony S. Shelly then became pastor. He was followed successively by William S. Gottshall, Samuel P. Pretherin, Elwood S. Shelly, and Victor B. Boyer. The present pastor is Howard G. Nyce.

By 1876 a Sunday school had been organized.³⁶ The membership of the Upper Milford congregation in 1895 was 96; today it is 164.

THE EVANGELICAL MENNONITES³⁷

Just as the Johnson Mennonites and several of the Hunsicker Group seceded from the Lower Skippack congregation of Oberholtzer's Conference so the Evangelical Mennonites seceded chiefly from the Upper Milford congregation of the same conference.

In 1849 William Gehman was ordained by lot to assist Preacher Joseph Schantz of Upper Milford. In a few years Gehman began to advocate prayer meetings and all that went with such meetings at that time. The question of prayer meetings was discussed at the May 5, 1853 session of conference. It was decided "that Prayer Meetings may be held at proper times and in proper order by such members or churches who desire them, but such members are not to hold it against those who do not feel as they do on this account and again those who do not approve of them are not to disrespect those who do"³⁸ Gehman also received the personal approval of both Oberholtzer and Bishop Moses Gottshall.³⁹ But by 1856 there had developed certain "misunderstandings" and at the May conference

³⁶ See the *1899 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 31, 32.

³⁷ This brief sketch is based on the work of Dr. J. A. Huffman, *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church*, New Carlisle, Ohio, 1920, pp. 62-73; and on the conference minutes of Oberholtzer's Conference.

³⁸ Conference minutes, translated from the German by Rev. N. B. Grubb.

³⁹ Huffman, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

the bishops (Moses H. Gottshall, Henry G. Johnson, John H. Oberholtzer, Christian Clemmer, and William N. Shelly) received permission to meet the next day to settle the difficulties, if possible. The report of this meeting, held in the home of Deacon William Gottshall on May 2, 1856, is included in the minutes of the October session of conference, ". . . resolved that the resolution [allowing prayer meetings to be held] be recalled and made void, but when any ministers or members gather at proper times for mutual edification through teaching and prayer, it is not and shall not be forbidden, but it is not to be regarded as an evangelical command that public appointments be made for Prayer Meetings, for men shall at all times pray to God in Spirit and Truth" ³⁸ A few days later (after May 2, 1856) Joseph Schantz reported the decision of the bishops to Gehman. But the prayer meetings were nevertheless continued. The October, 1856, session of Oberholtzer's Conference adopted and approved the decision of the bishops.

It was alleged that Gehman declared that the bishops' decision was "unevangelical." In May, 1857, Oberholtzer called a "conference of the whole church" at Springtown, Bucks county. At that meeting Oberholtzer referred to the alleged statement of Gehman's concerning the decision of the bishops against prayer meetings. He called for a vote as to whether the bishops' decision was "unevangelical." A lengthy discussion preceded the voting. All those voting against the bishops were to be considered suspended from church membership. Twenty-four advocates of prayer meetings ⁴⁰ were expelled. In the fall of 1857 Gehman, by a vote of twenty-five to twenty-four, was refused permission to hold services in the Upper Milford meetinghouse. The Oberholtzer congregation then paid the Gehman group \$300 for their interest in the church property. Gehman's party, however, was to be allowed to conduct funeral services in the meetinghouse and to bury in the old cemetery. The next year (1858) Gehman's congregation, which took the name, "Evangelical Mennonites," erected their first meetinghouse near Zionsville.

Gehman and his ministers and deacons held their first conference in the home of David Musselman on September 24, 1858. Those present were, Elders William N. Shelly and William Gehman; Preachers David Henning and Henry Diehl; Deacons David Gehman, Joseph Schneider, and Jacob Gottschall.

The Evangelical Mennonites are now called, Mennonite Brethren in Christ. An explanation of their history ⁴¹ is in order.

In 1848-49 Daniel Hoch and some followers separated from the Mennonite Church in Ontario on similar issues as those which excluded William Gehman from Oberholtzer's Conference in Pennsylvania. Hoch himself was a friend of Oberholtzer. He visited the latter's conference on May 5

⁴⁰ In this case the General Conference Mennonites are liable to abuse. Oberholtzer's Conference certainly believed in prayer. But their religion was not that of the faction which was advocating prayer meetings.

⁴¹ A brief summary is to be found in, C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonites*, Bern, Indiana, 1920, pp. 247-251. A more recent study is found in L. J. Burkholder, *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, 1935, pp. 188-196.

1853 and "greatly encouraged" the brethren and the congregation.⁴² A portion of Hoch's followers, the "New-Mennonites," helped to make up the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church.

In 1872-73 Solomon Eby of Ontario led in another division from the Mennonite Church. Eby advocated more emotional emphasis in conversion, prayer meetings, and all that went with such meetings. In 1874 Eby's followers united with a schismatic group of Indiana Mennonites to form the "Reformed Mennonites." The leaders in the division in Indiana were John Krupp and Daniel Brenneman. The issues were the same.

In 1875 the New Mennonites and the Reformed Mennonites united under the name "United Mennonites." In 1879 the United Mennonites of Ontario and Indiana merged with the Evangelical Mennonites of Pennsylvania to form the "Evangelical United Mennonites."

In 1838 a new schismatic sect of Brethren in Christ had appeared. In 1883 this group of Brethren in Christ united with the Evangelical United Mennonites to form the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. Thus three Mennonite bodies and one group of Brethren in Christ made up the present M. B. C. Church.

The present M. B. C. Church consists of seven conferences. The total membership of the church is almost 10,000. Emotional conversions are desired but many of the early excesses have been discarded. Baptism is performed by immersion (backward). No religious garb is required but separation from the world is emphasized. Foot washing is observed. Open communion is practised. Much stress is laid on a definite assurance of salvation, and instantaneous sanctification is also taught. Premillennialism is almost universally held in the group.

The Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ is divided into two districts, Allentown and Easton. The Allentown District has the following congregations: Bethel (Allentown), Bethlehem, Philadelphia, Reading, Emaus, Macungie, Zionsville, Fleetwood, Blandon, Terre Hill, Spring City, Royersford, Graterford, Harleysville, Nazareth, Northampton, Coopersburg, Salem (Allentown), Quakertown, Wissinoming (Philadelphia), West Philadelphia, Lehigh, Weissport and Walnutport. The Easton District of the Pennsylvania Conference has the following congregations: Easton, Shamokin, Sunbury, Stroudsburg, Scranton, Mount Carmel, Hatfield, and York.

GERMANTOWN

Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

As can be seen in Chapter I of Part II the old Germantown congregation declined gradually during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, so that by 1839 the congregation was "facing dissolution."

⁴² Minutes of Oberholtzer's Conference.

The few Mennonites who lived in Germantown in 1847 probably sympathized with Oberholtzer. And in 1851 they "stood by"⁴³ the Hunsicker group which Oberholtzer's Conference suspended for being too liberal. The Hunsicker faction did what little preaching was done here for the next decade.

On July 18, 1863 a Germantown Mennonite congregation was reorganized with thirteen members. F. R. S. Hunsicker was called as pastor.⁴⁴ A Sunday school was organized the same year. In 1867 Hunsicker united with the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. and was succeeded as the Germantown Mennonite pastor by Israel Beidler. Upon Beidler's death in 1876 John M. Haldeman of Line Lexington and N. B. Grubb of Philadelphia supplied the pulpit for two years, alternating every other Sunday. In 1876 the congregation united with the Eastern District Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. Pastors since Haldeman and Grubb have been William McArthur, Henry A. Frederick, Albert E. Funk, S. M. Grubb, S. M. Musselman, Frank F. Gabel, John W. Bayley,⁴⁵ A. S. Shelly, and Howard T. Landes.

The present iron fence was erected in 1858. The furnishings of the meetinghouse were installed during the Hunsicker regime in the early '60's.⁴⁴ A stone addition was built to the meetinghouse in 1916. The congregation now has a membership of 29.

FIRST MENNONITE

Diamond and Reese Streets (near Fifth) Philadelphia

This congregation was organized in 1865 with thirty-five members.⁴⁶ Moses Gottshall had the bishop oversight and the pulpit was supplied by "country" ministers. Samuel G. Clemmer served as the first pastor, 1868-1870. He was succeeded in quick succession by A. B. Shelly, Levi O. Schimmel, and A. E. Funk. In 1882 N. B. Grubb became pastor and served until 1921 when he became pastor emeritus. Carl J. Landes was a more recent pastor. He resigned in 1936 to become field secretary of the Mennonite Peace Society. He was succeeded by J. J. Plenert.

In 1867 a frame chapel was rented on the present site of the church. This was later purchased. The present brick edifice was erected in 1881.

A Sunday school was organized in 1868. A Christian Endeavor Society was organized in 1892.

The church membership in 1895 was 314; today it is 346.

⁴³ Henry A. Hunsicker, *1907 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 20-24.

⁴⁴ N. B. Grubb, *The Mennonite Church of Germantown*, Philadelphia, 1906. See also S. M. Grubb, "Bits of Germantown History", in the *1933 Year Book of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of N. A.*, pp. 25-29.

⁴⁵ Originally a Methodist minister.

⁴⁶ *1898 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 29, 30.

SECOND MENNONITE

Indiana Avenue and Franklin Street
Philadelphia

The Second Mennonite Church had its origin in a mission Sunday school which was opened in a chapel on Jenney Street in the Frankford District on February 9, 1894.⁴⁷ The next year a Sunday school was opened in a hall at 2937 Marshall Street. In 1897 the work was continued in a private home, 3007 North Sixth Street. In 1898 the present lot, 36 ft. by 66 ft., was purchased for \$3,000 and a church erected thereon at a cost of \$4,500. The new building was dedicated on April 9, 1899. On May 5, 1899 Second Mennonite Church was organized and Silas M. Grubb called as pastor. The congregation then consisted of twenty-two members; today the membership is 200. Rev. Grubb is still serving.

The following men have served as deacons, each man being elected for a certain number of years, Harvey Shelly, John Bergey, George Bergey, William Cassel, Sylvester Trout, Maxwell Kratz, William Deusch, Abraham Weill, and William Shelly.

ZION

Souderton, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

After the Branch services were discontinued (about 1884) there were eight or ten General Conference Mennonites living in or about Souderton who had no church home. On January 9, 1887 N. B. Grubb preached in Hunsberger's Hall, Souderton.⁴⁸ The next service was held in the hall of the Central Hotel. A. B. Shelly and N. B. Grubb held services alternately every two weeks. After the Zwingli Reformed Church was built in 1887-88 the Mennonites rented that church every two weeks for \$75 per year. In the fall of 1892 building operations were begun. A brick church 36 ft. by 46 ft., was erected at a cost of \$2,933.02.

On February 8, 1893 Zion Mennonite congregation was organized with nineteen members. A. M. Fretz was called as pastor. During his pastorate a five-thousand-dollar addition was erected. He was succeeded as pastor by John B. W. Schantz in 1910. After the death of Rev. Schantz in 1916 Reed F. Landis became pastor, being ordained on April 1, 1917. In 1923 Rev. Landis was succeeded by Grover T. Soldner. In 1931 Ernest J. Bohn succeeded Rev. Soldner. Deacons of the congregation have been William G. Moyer, F. K. Moyer, J. D. Moyer, William N. Cassel, and A. S. Kulp.

The Sunday school, at first a union organization, was organized in 1892. A Christian Endeavor Society was organized about 1894; a Ladies' Aid Society in 1895; a Brotherhood in 1928; a Ladies' Missionary Society in 1928; a Young People's Christian Endeavor in 1931, and an Intermediate Christian Endeavor in 1933. The membership in 1895 was 63; today it is 484.

⁴⁷ 1900 *Schwenkfelder Year Book and Almanac*, p. 28. Rev. Silas M. Grubb also contributed a historical sketch.

⁴⁸ *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Zion Mennonite Church of Souderton, Pa., 1918*. Henry S. Landis, *History of Souderton* . . . , Souderton, Pa., 1930, pp. 37, 38.

POTTSTOWN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Oak and Evans Streets

On January 27, 1894 N. B. Grubb held a public service in Feather's Hall, Pottstown, for the special benefit of a number of General Conference Mennonites who had located in the borough.⁴⁹ The largest number of these Mennonites originally came from the Boyertown congregation. After a while the auditorium of the Arms' Academy was rented. But in the fall of 1894 a brick chapel, 27 by 40 feet, was erected on the corner of Oak and Evans streets. The new building was dedicated as the First Mennonite Church of Pottstown on April 21, 1895. A Sunday school was begun at once. The congregation was organized with W. S. Gottshall as pastor on December 30, 1895. In 1898 he was succeeded as pastor by H. G. Allebach. Later some congregational difficulties developed and the congregation disintegrated. A Holiness group seems to possess the church building now.

BETHANY

Juniper Street near Third

Quakertown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

A number of Mennonites living in or near Quakertown met in Saint Paul's Evangelical Church on December 27, 1898 to consider the organization of a new congregation.⁵⁰ On January 2, 1899 Bethany Mennonite Church was organized. That same year the property of Saint Paul's Evangelical Church was bought and the building was remodeled. The total cost was about \$2,300. On September 30, 1900 reopening and dedicatory services were held.

Several organizations of the congregation are older than the Bethany Church itself. The Sunday school was organized in 1895 and the Young People's Society in 1897. More recently Ladies' Aid and Mission Societies have been organized.

The pastors have been, A. B. Shelly, 1898-1913; H. G. Allebach, 1913-1921; P. E. Frantz, 1922-1925; S. M. Rosenberger; Arthur S. Rosenberger and A. J. Neuenschwander.

The present membership of Bethany Church is 134.

BETHEL

Fifth and Race Streets

Perkasie, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

On August 16, 1900 A. M. Fretz met with a number of General Conference Mennonites living in Perkasie and vicinity and organized a mission workers' band ". . . for our own spiritual welfare, the saving of souls,

⁴⁹ 1900 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 24.

⁵⁰ 1902 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 37; 1926 *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 41; The late U. S. Stauffer also submitted a historical sketch of the Bethany congregation.

the glory of Christ, and growth of His Church⁵¹ The First Baptist Church of Perkasio was rented for services every Sunday afternoon and one evening each week. After several periods when the work was temporarily discontinued, Bethel congregation was organized on June 10, 1905 with A. B. Shelly as elder (bishop), Harvey W. Shelly as pastor and Harvey H. Baum as Deacon. On July 9, 1905 a Sunday school was organized. On September 17, 1905 William H. Grubb succeeded H. W. Shelly as pastor. The congregation purchased a lot in 1906 but for five years were not able to erect a church. In 1910 W. H. Grubb resigned and H. W. Shelly again became pastor. Mr. Baum also resigned as deacon and was succeeded by Clayton F. Myers in 1910. Mr. Myers has been re-elected every three years since that time. Pastor Shelly revived interest in building a house of worship. The present structure, 40 ft. by 46 ft. was completed in 1911, dedicatory services being held on December 3. The lot cost \$1,000 and the church about \$4,275.00.

In 1918 Rev. Shelly resigned and was succeeded by A. M. Fretz, the present pastor. The present membership is 23.

FIRST MENNONITE

Chew Street near Twelfth
Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

About the beginning of the present century the Home Mission and Church Extension Committee of the Eastern District Conference began to hold services in Allentown.⁵² These meetings were first held in a public hall on Seventh Street near Hamilton, later in the German Baptist Church on Twelfth Street. First Mennonite Church was organized on August 3, 1903. A Sunday school was soon organized in the McKinley public school building. In 1904 the present site was purchased and a frame building erected on it. The total cost was about \$3,275. One appreciated contribution was 200 German marks (\$47.29) secured through the mediation of Rev. H. van der Smitten from a fund held by the Hamburg-Altona Mennonite Church in honor of B. C. Roosen. Rev. van der Smitten had visited America in 1904 and became acquainted with the need at Allentown. The building was dedicated on February 12, 1905. By 1913 the congregation had outgrown the first church and in its place was erected a brick structure of Gothic architecture, 40 ft. by 52 ft., with a Sunday-school annex, 38 ft. by 48 ft. The new building was dedicated on December 12.

The pastors included, William H. Grubb, W. S. Gottshall, S. P. Preheim, V. B. Boyer, and Howard G. Nyce. Organizations include a Christian Endeavor Society and a Ladies' Aid Society. The present membership is 152.

⁵¹ Allen M. Fretz submitted a historical sketch. The help of this aged yet youthful minister is deeply appreciated. See also the *1913 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 23, 24.

⁵² See the *1906 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 22; the *1917 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 32, 33; and the *1926 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, p. 40.

GRACE

Mount Vernon Street

Lansdale, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

In February, 1928, the General Conference Mennonites of Lansdale began to meet at private homes each Thursday evening for Bible study and worship.⁵³ This "Lansdale Mission" was organized on February 23. In July, 1929, this group began to use quite often the Evangelical Church on Mount Vernon Street. On September 29, 1929 the mission was officially opened in this church. On November 11, 1929 the mission band purchased the Evangelical Church property.

During the same year the name was changed to Grace Mennonite Church. A. M. Fretz was elected pastor emeritus and Daniel J. Unruh of Kingston, West Virginia was called as pastor. Rev. Unruh took charge on January 1, 1930. On January 12 Sunday school and preaching services were started. Installation services for the pastor were held on March 23, 1930. At that time Allen M. Fretz also ordained his son, Jacob R. Fretz, as deacon.

Grace Mennonite Church already has a membership of 164.

OTHER CHURCHES

Besides the churches of the General Conference Mennonites in the territory originally covered by the Franconia Conference district a number of other congregations are affiliated with the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America. There are six such in Central Pennsylvania: Altoona, Mechanics Grove, Napier, Richfield, Roaring Spring and Smith Corner. Pine Grove Mennonite Church of Bowmansville, Lancaster county, is also affiliated with the Eastern District Conference.

MINISTERIAL LIST

OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF
MENNONITES OF NORTH AMERICA¹

ALLEBACH, A. J.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Listed in the *Year Book*² as minister for a number of years, beginning in 1915.

ALLEBACH, HARVEY G., 1869-1921.

Edited *The Mennonite* for several years, beginning in 1901. Accepted the pastorate of the Swamp charge in 1914.

⁵³ *Historic Review, Constitution and By-Laws, Grace Mennonite Church of Lansdale; Pa., 1930.* Rev. D. J. Unruh was very helpful in submitting data.

¹ Formerly the East Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference.

Deacons are not included in this list, partly because the author's list is far from complete and partly because deacons no longer occupy the same office in this

- AMSTUTZ, S. S.
Minister, 1923 *Year Book*.
Mechanics Grove, Pa.
- APPLE, PHILIP.
Minister, 1913 *Year Book*.
Mt. Pleasant Mills, Pa.
- BAERGEN, G. M.
Minister, 1923 *Year Book*.
Altoona, Pa.
- BAUMAN, IRWIN W.
Licentiate, 1926 *Year Book*.
Bally, Pa.
- BAYLEY, JOHN W., 1842-1921.
Originally a Methodist. Began preaching at the Germantown Mennonite Church about 1906.
- BECHTEL, ANDREW S.
Evangelist, 1915 *Year Book*.
Philadelphia, Pa.
- BEIDLER, ISRAEL, 1815-1876.
Mennonite bishop; evidently ordained in 1847 or 1848 by the East Pennsylvania (Oberholtzer's) Conference. Expelled in 1851 for advocating a lax discipline. Preached at Diamond Rock and Phoenixville.
- BEITLER, JESSE J., 1805-1863.
Ordained by Franconia Conference; seceded about 1847. Later returned to the Franconia Conference, evidently as a minister. Buried at Diamond Rock.
- BERGEY, DAVID, 1804-1887.
Ordained as preacher at Lower Skippack, 1852; as bishop, 1868. Preached at Skippack and Branch (Rockhill).
- BOEHR, P. J.
Minister, 1935 *Year Book*.
Richlandtown, Pa.
- BOHN, ERNEST J., 1894-
A. B., Goshen College, 1923; B. D., Garret Biblical Institute, 1926. Ordained as minister at Tiskilwa, Ill., 1926; as elder, 1928. Called to Zion Mennonite, Souderton, 1931. 1935 Moderator of the Eastern District Conference.

group as in the Franconia Conference. In this group deacons are now elected for a stated term, often five years. The names of a number of deacons are to be found in the index.

This list is composed of elders (formerly called bishops), ministers, and licentiates. Qualified volunteers for the ministry are licensed. Upon receiving a call to a pastorate the licentiate is ordained. (The *Year Book* lists the licentiates apart from the ordained ministers since 1921.) Ministers are usually soon ordained to the eldership. The usual arrangement now is for each congregation to have its own elder. This list includes all the ministers of the conference from 1847 to 1937.

² This annual book, the *Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, will hereafter be referred to simply as the *Year Book*.

- BOWMAN, HARVEY (BAUMAN). Quakertown, Pa.
Licentiate, 1921 *Year Book*. Ordained to the ministry at West Swamp,
September 13, 1925, for missionary work.
- BOYER, VICTOR D. Allentown, Pa.
Minister, 1914 *Year Book*.
- BRAND, DANIEL J. Bally, Pa.
Minister, 1916 *Year Book*.
- BUHLER, GEORGE G. Quarryville, Pa.
Minister, 1933 *Year Book*.
- BUTTON, JACOB, 1794-1884.
Ordained as minister at Branch (Rockhill) by 1851. Was deposed from
the ministry. Returned to Franconia Conference as a layman.
- CLEMMER, CHRISTIAN, 1813-1883.
Ordained as minister in Franconia Conference in 1842; seceded in
1847; later ordained as elder. Preached at Hereford.
- CLEMMER, SAMUEL C., 1821-1870.
Ordained to the ministry at Hereford in 1853. Called to Philadelphia
as pastor, First Mennonite, 1868.
- CLYMER, HARVEY.
Ordained as evangelist in the Boyertown church in 1894. Later left
the church.³
- FOULKE, LINFORD. Quakertown, Pa.
Minister, 1916 *Year Book*.
- FRANTZ, PETER E. Quakertown, Pa.
Minister, 1923 *Year Book*.
- FREDERICKS, HARRY.
Preached at Germantown soon after 1876.⁴
- FRETZ, ALLEN M., 1853-
Ordained as minister at Deep Run, October 13, 1883; as elder, Novem-
ber 24, 1892. Studied at the Mennonite school at Wadsworth, Ohio,
1870; at Excelsior Normal Institute, Carversville, Pa., 1871. Taught
school, 1872-1884. One of the outstanding leaders of his church. As-
sistant Editor of *The Mennonite*, 1885-1896. Secretary of his confer-
ence, 1913-1929. Charges: Deep Run, 1883- ; Souderton, 1893-
1909; Pottstown, 1910-1913; Springfield, 1913; Perkasio, 1918- ;
Lansdale, 1928-1930.
- FRETZ, JACOB R. Lansdale, Pa.
Licentiate, 1922 *Year Book*.

³ *Church and Home*, July, 1916, Schwenksville, Pa.

⁴ N. B. Grubb, *The Mennonite Church of Germantown*, Philadelphia, 1906; D. K. Cassel, *Geschichte der Mennoniten*, p. 73.

FRETZ, MARTIN, 1808-1882.

First pastor of the Deep Run General Conference Mennonite Church; ordained by 1849. About 1853 he moved to New Jersey where he later united with the Presbyterian Church.

GABEL, FRANK F.

Ordained as minister at Springfield, 1907; Resigned, 1913.

GEHMAN, RUDY H.

Bowmansville, Pa.

Licentiate, 1921 *Year Book*.

GEHMAN, WILLIAM, 1827-1918.

Ordained as minister by lot at Upper Milford in 1849. Within a decade had separated from his conference and organized the "Evangelical Mennonites." (See Part V, page 369).

GEISINGER, JOHN, 1812-1879.

Ordained as minister at Springfield in 1849.⁵

GERIG, DANIEL.

Smith Corner, Pa.

Minister, 1923 *Year Book*

GLASS, L. H.

Altoona, Pa.

Minister, 1926 *Year Book*.

GOTTSHALL, ABRAHAM H., 1826-1901.

Ordained as minister at Hereford, 1870. (Brother of Bishop Moses H. Gottshall.) Served at Hereford until 1888; then became pastor at Boyertown.

GOTTSHALL, HARVEY S., 1879-1914.

Ordained at Schwenksville, March 16, 1902. Assisted A. B. Shelly in the Swamp charge, 1902-1904. Gave up the ministry on account of his health.⁶

GOTTSHALL, JACOB (?).

Reported as out of fellowship at the October, 1858, conference session. He seems to have become an Evangelical Mennonite. If so, he was a deacon, not a minister.⁷

GOTTSHALL, MOSES H., 1815-1888.

Ordained as a minister, December 3, 1847; as bishop, three years later. Preached at Schwenksville. A man of great influence and popularity.

GOTTSHALL, WILLIAM S., 1865-

Ordained to the ministry by lot on October 15, 1884; to the eldership by lot, November 24, 1886. A graduate of Ursinus Theological Seminary, 1889. Charges: Schwenksville, 1884-1905; Allentown and Upper Milford, 1905-1909; Bluffton, Ohio, 1909-1924; Salem, Freeman, S. D., 1924-1930; East Swamp, 1930-. A very influential leader.

⁵ D. K. Cassel, *Geschichte*, p. 120.

⁶ 1915 *Year Book*, p. 23.

⁷ *Glaubenslehre und Kirchenzucht-Ordnung der Evangel. Mennoniten Gemeinschaft* . . . , Skippackville, Pa., 1866, p. 4.

GRATER, ABRAHAM, 1814-1905.

Ordained at Lower Skippack, January 1, 1850. Became an independent minister.⁸

GRAYBILL, ELMER W.

Richfield, Pa.

Minister, 1913 *Year Book*.

GRAYBILL, B. S.

Richfield, Pa.

Minister, 1930 *Year Book*.

GRUBB, NATHANIEL B., 1850-

Ordained without the use of the lot, June 30, 1872, at Schwenksville. Some folks had fears as to the outcome because the lot was not used.⁹ Ordained to the eldership on May 22, 1884. Established and published the *Schwenksville Item*, 1877-1883. In 1887 helped to found *The Mennonite* which he edited for six years. Charges: Schwenksville, 1872-1884; Germantown — alternating with John M. Haldeman — 1876-1877; First Mennonite, Philadelphia, 1883-1921. An influential leader.

GRUBB, SILAS M., 1873-

Son of N. B. Grubb. Ordained to the ministry in Second Mennonite, Philadelphia, May 18, 1899; as elder, January 7, 1907; still serves there Editor of *The Mennonite*, 1914-1936. The new editor, Dr. John R. Thierstein, lives in Kansas.

GRUBB, WILLIAM HENRY, 1879-

Son of N. B. Grubb. Ordained as minister at Allentown, August 13, 1903. Later served in Perkasio, Pa., Trenton, O., Schwenksville, Pa., and is now in Normal, Illinois.

HAGENBUCH, J. J.

Allentown, Pa.

Minister, 1921 *Year Book*.

HALDEMAN, JOHN M., 1824-1881.

Ordained by the Franconia Conference at Lexington in 1869. In 1876 united with the General Conference Mennonites; returned to the Franconia Conference as a layman.

HARELINE,¹⁰ SAMUEL J.

Mann's Choice, Pa.

Minister, 1917 *Year Book*.

HENNING, DAVID, 1806-1881.

Evidently ordained by the East Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference but soon followed William Gehman when the latter organized the Evangelical Mennonite Church. In May, 1858, the East Pennsylvania Conference disowned him and on September 24 of that year he participated in the first Evangelical Mennonite Conference.¹¹ He lived in Bangor and preached at the old Mennonite Church there. Before he

⁸ *Hunsicker Family History*, p. 44.

⁹ *Church and Home*, June, 1916,—M. C. Gottshall.

¹⁰ Also spelled Hairline and Herline.

¹¹ *Glaubenslehre und Kirchenzucht-Ordnung der Evangel. Mennoniten-Gemeinschaft von Ost-Pennsylvanien*, Skippackville, Pa., 1866, p. 4.

died he gave the property to the Lutherans as his congregation had disintegrated.

HUNSBERGER, EPHRAIM, 1814-1904.

Ordained by lot on October 18, 1849 at Hereford; as bishop, October 10, 1852. Moved to Medina county, Ohio, in October, 1852.

HUNSICKER, ABRAHAM, 1793-1872.

Ordained as minister by the Franconia Conference on January 1, 1847. Seceded with Oberholtzer in that same year and in the fall of 1847 was ordained bishop to succeed his brother, John. Expelled in 1851.

HUNSICKER, HENRY A., 1825-1916.

Ordained January 1, 1850. Son of Bishop Abraham. He, his father, and two others were expelled from conference in 1851 for holding too lax views on church discipline.

HUNSICKER, JOHN, 1773-1847.

Son of Bishop Henry. Preached almost forty years. Senior bishop of the Franconia Conference in 1847. Seceded with Oberholtzer in 1847. His lifework was done in the Franconia Conference.

HUNTER, R. R.

Altoona, Pa.

Licentiate, 1930 *Year Book*.

JOHNSON, ELMER E. S., 1872-

Graduated from Perkiomen Seminary, Pennsburg, Pa., 1895; A.B., Princeton University, 1899; B.D., Hartford (Conn.) Theological Seminary, 1902; Ph.D., *ibid.*, 1911; D.D., Franklin and Marshall College (Pa.), 1924. Ordained in the Schwenkfelder meetinghouse which formerly stood near Clayton, Pa., 1902. Charges: First Schwenkfelder Church, Philadelphia, 1902-04; Hereford Mennonite Church, Bally, Pa., 1921-. Dr. Johnson is a Schwenkfelder; from 1904-15 he was associate editor of *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*; since 1916, editor-in-chief. Since 1922-23 is Waldo Professor of Church History at Hartford Theological Seminary. Trustee of the Perkiomen School and custodian of the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pa. For more data consult *Who's Who in America*.

JOHNSON, HENRY G., 1806-1879.

Ordained as minister at Lower Skippack, December 2, 1847; as bishop, December 1, 1852. Withdrew, together with the greater part of his congregation, from conference and became independent. (See Part V, p. 360).

KEISER, AUSTIN.

Quakertown, Pa.

Licentiate, 1921 *Year Book*.

KEPHART, W. O.

Roaring Springs, Pa.

Minister, 1920 *Year Book*.

KING, W. HARLEY.

Quarryville, Pa.

Minister, 1931 *Year Book*.

KREHBIEL, OLIN A.

Son of Christian Kriebel, General Secretary of the General Conference Mennonites of North America. Accepted the call to the pastorate of Grace Mennonite, Lansdale, 1936.

LANDES, CARL J., 1904-

Studied at Bluffton College and Witmarsum Seminary (Ohio), 1927-30; Temple University, 1930-33; Pendle Hill (Pa.), 1934. Ordained as minister, June 23, 1929; as elder, June 8, 1930. Charges: Donnellson, Iowa, June, 1929 to September, 1929; First Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, 1930-36. Is now Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Peace Society.

LANDES, HOWARD T. 1905-

6813 Clearview St., Mt. Airy,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Attended the Bible Institute of Pennsylvania and is now enrolled at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Ordained at the old Germantown meetinghouse September 6, 1928; is still serving in that church.

LANDIS, D. M.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Licentiate, 1927 *Year Book*.

LANDIS, REED F., 1889-

Ordained at Zion Mennonite, Souderton, April 1, 1917; as elder, 1918. Since 1923 pastor of the First Congregational Church, Germantown.

LANDIS, WILLIAM, 1798-1848.

Ordained by the Franconia Conference at Saucon. Seceded with Oberholtzer in 1847.

LANTZ, SAMUEL.

Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

Minister, 1909 *Year Book*.

LEHMAN, J. S.

Lancaster, Pa.

1917 *Year Book*.

LONGAKER, SAMUEL H., 1841-1903.

Ordained by lot at Schwenksville in 1868. Resigned from the ministry in 1870.¹²

LOUX, ENOS F., 1819-1895.

Ordained about 1852 or 1853 at Deep Run to succeed Martin Fretz. Withdrew from the active ministry after a number of years.

MARTIN, AMOS F.

Lancaster, Pa.

Minister, 1919 *Year Book*.

MEYERS, AARON.

Savanah, Ohio

Licentiate, 1921 *Year Book*.

MILLER, S. P.

Duncansville, Pa.

Evangelist, 1920 *Year Book*.

¹² 1904 *Year Book*, pp. 30, 31.

MOYER, JACOB S.,¹³ 1842-1909.

Son of Samuel Moyer. Ordained as minister at Springfield, July, 1871; as bishop, 1872. Preached at Springfield. Served Deep Run, 1871-1883. A prominent minister.

MOYER, SAMUEL, 1806-1877.

Probably ordained by the Franconia Conference. Was for a time identified with the East Pennsylvania Conference. Returned as a minister to the Franconia Conference about 1861. Preached at Saucon and Springfield.

MOYER, SAMUEL, 1812-1891.

Ordained in 1851 at Springfield.¹⁴

MYERS, MENNO M.

Bowmansville, Pa.

Minister, 1916 *Year Book*.

NEUENSCHWANDER, A. J., 1888-

Graduate of Berne (Ind.) High School; A.B., Bluffton College, 1916; B.D., Mennonite Seminary (Bluffton); post-graduate student, Mt. Airy Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia, and Garret Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill. Ordained at Trenton, Ohio, September 2, 1918. Charges: Apostolic Mennonite Church, Trenton, Ohio, 1918-21; First Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa., 1921-29; First Mennonite Church, Upland, California, 1929-33; Swamp Mennonite Charge, Quakertown, Pa., 1933-; Secretary of the General Conference Peace Committee, 1926-; treasurer of the General Conference Home Mission Board, 1935-; secretary of the Eastern District Conference, 1935-; Alumni member, Bluffton College Board of Trustees, 1919-29.

NYCE, HOWARD G.

Minister Lansdale, Pa. (1926 *Year Book*); East Swamp; Allentown, Pa. (1930 *Year Book*).

OBERHOLTZER, JOHN H.,¹⁵ 1809-1895.

Ordained at the (West?) Swamp Church by the Franconia Conference in 1842. Seceded from the Franconia Conference in 1847. Ordained bishop in 1847. In a few years he became the leader of the new conference. Author, publisher, strong leader.

OBERHOLTZER, MENNO.

Bechtelsville, Pa.

Minister, 1910 *Year Book*.

OTT, SOLOMON, 1831-1913.

Ordained at Bowmansville, November 14, 1858. Preached there over fifty-four years.

¹³ 1911 *Year Book*, pp. 28, 29.

¹⁴ *Moyer Family History*, p. 613.

¹⁵ 1908 *Year Book*, p. 34; 1927 *Year Book*, p. 25; Krehbiel, *The History of The General Conference Of The Mennonites of North America*, Canton, Ohio, 1888, pp. 407-413.

PLENERT, JOHN J., 1893- . 2442 N. Seventh St., Philadelphia
 Student at Hillsboro (Kansas) High School, 1910-15; Bible Institute,
 Los Angeles, California, 1919-21; Bethel College, Kansas, 1925-28.
 Ordained in July, 1921 at the Johannesthal Mennonite Church, Hills-
 boro, Kansas. Charges: First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kansas,
 1921-25; 1927-36; Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kansas,
 1926-27 (student pastor); First Mennonite Church, Philadelphia,
 1936-

PREHEIM, S. P.

Minister, Allentown (1911 *Year Book*).

RAUGH, JOHN S.

Pastor of Smith Corner Mennonite Church, 1937 *Year Book*.

RIEHL, J. F.

Lewisburg, Pa.

Minister, 1919 *Year Book*.

ROSENBERGER, ARTHUR S. 1898-

Studied at Pennsylvania State College 1916-18; A. B., Bluffton Col-
 lege, 1921; B. D., Witmarsum Theological Seminary, 1923; A. M.,
 University of Pennsylvania, 1931. Ordained both to ministry and
 eldership in the Germantown meetinghouse June 23, 1923. Charges:
 St. John Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio, 1923-30; Swamp (Pa.)
 Charge (West Swamp, Quakertown and Flatland) 1930-34. Assumed
 the presidency of Bluffton College (Ohio) in June, 1935.

ROSENBERGER, JOSEPH D., 1830-1908.

Ordained at Deep Run. In 1870 united with the Franconia Conference
 as a layman.

ROSENBERGER, SEWARD M.

Minister, Philadelphia (1921 *Year Book*); Quakertown, Pa., (1926
Year Book).

SCHANTZ, JOHN WENGER,¹⁶ 1878-1916.

Ordained as minister at Schwenksville on June 2, 1907. Pastor there
 until his death; also pastor of Zion Mennonite, Souderton, 1910-16.

SCHANTZ, JOSEPH, 1814-1881.

Ordained at the Upper Milford Church by the Franconia Conference
 in 1844. Seceded with John H. Oberholtzer in 1847.

SCHIMMEL, LEVI O.,¹⁷ 1826-1903.

Ordained as minister at East Swamp, October 5, 1858; called to Wads-
 worth, Ohio, 1869; called to First Mennonite, Philadelphia, 1872; was
 then soon ordained as elder. Withdrew from the active ministry about
 1881 because of ill health.

SHAW, L. L.

Altoona, Pa.

Licentiate, 1922 *Year Book*.

¹⁶ 1917 *Year Book*, pp. 17, 18.

¹⁷ 1904 *Year Book*, pp. 28-30.

SHELLY, ANDREW B.,¹⁸ 1834-1913.

Ordained as minister, March 25, 1864; as elder, August 22, 1872. His charge included West Swamp, East Swamp, Flatland, and Saucon. During 1869 and 1871 he also preached at the First Mennonite Church, Philadelphia. Organized Bethany Mennonite, Quakertown. Perhaps the outstanding leader of the conference. He has been called, "The personification of the Conference." From 1871-1882 he served as president of the Eastern District Conference, and from 1872-1896 as president of General Conference. From 1889-1911 he served as secretary of the Foreign Mission Board.

SHELLY, ANTHONY S.,¹⁹ 1853-1928.

Taught in the Mennonite school, Wadsworth, Ohio, 1878-1880. In 1884 he was called to the Halstead (Kansas) school where he began to preach. In 1886 he returned to the Eastern District Conference and was granted an evangelist's license. About 1890 he was ordained to the eldership and became pastor of the Hereford congregation, which charge he held for twenty-five years. He also preached at the Upper Milford Church, Zionsville, Pa., for sixteen years; and at Boyertown, nine years. He preached three years at Upland, California; two years at Bluffton, Ohio; and five years at Germantown, Pa. He was for ten years editor of *The Mennonite*, during which time he translated the *Ris* Articles of Faith from German to English.

SHELLY, ELWOOD S.

The present pastor of the Boyertown congregation. His name appears in the *Year Book* as early as 1908. He is blind.

SHELLY, HARVEY W., d. 1932.

Quakertown, Pa.

He is listed as a minister as early as 1907.

SHELLY, PAUL.

Pennsburg, Pa.

Son of Elwood S. Shelly. Licentiate, 1935.

SHELLY, URIAH.

Ordained at Upper Milford in 1874; was forced to resign after a number of years because of ill health.²⁰

SHELLY, WARREN.

Bethlehem, Pa.

Minister, 1909 *Year Book*.

SHELLY, WILLIAM N.

United with Oberholtzer's Conference in 1848.²¹ Followed William Gehman into the Evangelical Mennonite Church. Was stricken from the list of the East Pennsylvania Conference ministers in May, 1858.

SHELLY, WILMER.

Bluffton, Ohio.

Licentiate, 1923 *Year Book*.

¹⁸ 1915 *Year Book*, pp. 17-19; 1927 *Year Book*, pp. 26, 27.

¹⁹ 1927 *Year Book*, pp. 32, 33; 1929 *Year Book*, p. 38.

²⁰ Cassel, *Geschichte*, pp. 127, 128.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

- SNYDER, ABRAM.²² Roaring Springs, Pa.
Minister, 1913 *Year Book*.
- SNYDER, HERMAN. Roaring Springs, Pa.
Minister, 1914 *Year Book*.
- SNYDER, JACOB. Roaring Springs, Pa.
Minister, 1914 *Year Book*.
- SNYDER, S. P. Roaring Springs, Pa.
Licentiate, 1922 *Year Book*.
- SOLDNER, GROVER T., 1892-
Ordained to the eldership at First Mennonite, Bluffton, Ohio, April 18, 1920. Charges: Summerfield, Ill., 1920-1923; Zion, Souderton, Pa., 1923-1931; Eighth Street, Goshen, Ind., 1931-1936. Field Secretary of Bluffton (Ohio) College, 1936-.
- STUBBS, RAYMOND V. Hatfield, Pa.
Licentiate, 1927 *Year Book*.
- SWARR, J. W. Quarryville, Pa.
Minister, 1921 *Year Book*.
- SWARTZ, FREEMAN H., 1898-
Elected pastor at Eden, Schwenksville, October 2, 1921. Ordained as minister, October 16, 1921; as elder, October 8, 1922. Present moderator of the Eastern District Conference (1936.)
- TEMPLE, WALTER. Wilkes Barre, Pa.
Licentiate, 1936 *Year Book*.
- UNRUH, DANIEL J., 1895-
Ordained July 4, 1921. Labored at Kingston, W. Va., in interdenominational work. Pastor of Grace Church, Lansdale, 1930-1936. Transferred to Pandora, Ohio, 1936.
- UNRUH, JACOB J. Mann's Choice, Pa.
Minister, 1933 *Year Book*.
- VAN DER SMISSSEN, CARL H. A.,²³ 1851-
Born at Friedrichstadt, Schleswig-Holstein. Educated in the German universities. Came to America as a young man. Ordained near Ashland, Ohio, October 15, 1874. Called to Upper Milford, Zionsville, Pa., as pastor, 1881. In 1885 added Hereford to his charge. In 1890 he accepted a call to Summerfield, Illinois, where he labored for twenty-one years. In 1911 he was called to Berne, Indiana, to assist in editorial work. He now resides at Newton, Kansas, and still does some editorial work.

²² An Abraham Snyder of Roaring Springs, Pa., is listed as a Mennonite minister as early as 1898 but his conference affiliation is not given. In 1920 an A. A. Snyder of Mann's Choice, Pa., appears.

WEINBERGER, J. SAMUEL.

Ordained at Branch (Rockhill) by 1851. In 1858 performed the marriage ceremony of A. B. Shelly and Fannie Weinberger. He was later removed from office.

WOLF, ADAM.

Minister, 1926 *Year Book*.

Altoona, Pa.

YODER, STEPHEN D.

Minister, 1914 *Year Book*.

Davidsville, Pa.

²³ 1927 *Year Book*, pp. 34, 35.

Chapter III

THE WORCESTER REFORMED MENNONITE CHURCH

The Reformed Mennonite Church was founded in 1812 by John Herr of Strasburg township, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania.¹ John's father, Francis Herr, had become dissatisfied with the Mennonite Church and had finally been excommunicated on a charge of "having taken undue advantage of a neighbor in the sale of a horse." Herr and others met for worship in private homes until his death in 1810. John Herr was then a young man of twenty-eight. In 1812 John was baptized by one, Abraham Landis, and he in turn baptized Landis and Abraham Groff. Herr was then chosen bishop, Landis a preacher, and Groff the deacon of a new church. They soon assumed the name of Reformed Mennonite Church. But locally in Lancaster county they were called "New Mennonites" and "Herrites."

Herr taught that early Mennonitism was good enough but the Mennonite Church had since become altogether dead spiritually, "and it is to be feared that the candlestick is removed from them. . . ."² Doctrinally Herr had nothing to add to Mennonitism but he forced his followers to dress severely plainly, taught a rigid application of the ban and forbade Reformed Mennonites to attend the services of any other denomination.

Herr began to make trips to Montgomery county about 1820.³ The Funkites seem to have allowed him the use of their meetinghouses. About the only thing the Funkites and Herrites had in common was contempt for the Mennonite Church. According to Heckler the Funkites couldn't agree in their attitude toward Herr and his doctrines. But the Reformed Mennonites did succeed in establishing a small congregation in Montgomery county. They perhaps worshiped in Funkite meetinghouses at first. And when the Funkite meetinghouse along the Souderton-Harleysville highway was moved to Delp's burying ground in 1855 the Herrites then worshiped in the building at the new location. The abandoned meetinghouse is still called the "Herrehouse." The Herrites seem to have abandoned Delp's meetinghouse about sixty years ago. Perhaps they then held their services in private homes for about fifteen years. In 1890 they erected their present meetinghouse in Worcester township on land donated by Jacob Wisler.⁴ The opening services were held in June, 1890. The sermon was preached

¹ Based on the work of C. Henry Smith, *Mennonites of America*, Goshen, Indiana, 1909, pp. 292-298. Daniel Musser, a Reformed Mennonite, wrote, *The Reformed Mennonite Church, 1873*. John F. Funk replied in *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers, 1878*.

² Quoted by Funk, *Accusers*, p. 15.

³ James Y. Heckler, *History of Lower Salford Township, Harleysville, Pa.*, p. 30.

⁴ The history of the Worcester congregation is based on the research of John D. Souder.

by the pastor of the congregation, Mahlon V. Heist. On July 1, 1890 Heist died. His funeral service was the second service in the building.

An earlier preacher was John Kolb (1804-1879).

Since Heist's death the congregation is without a resident minister. A Lancaster county Reformed Mennonite minister supplies the pulpit every four weeks.

The membership was 21 in 1931; Godshalls, Troxels, Koffels, and Clemmers. The chorister of the congregation is Harvey Clemmer of Sellersville, a grandson of Bishop Josiah S. Clemmer of Franconia.

Chapter IV

THE GODSHALL GROUP

A congregation of worshipers meets in a private home in Bucks or Montgomery county every two weeks for a religious service. The membership of the group is less than fifty. These services are often held in Telford, at the home of Clayton Detweiler, a member. Locally this non-sectarian sect is known as Godshall's Folks. They are a Mennonite group.

The Godshall group¹ takes its name from Charles Godshall, a layman, who, with several others, withdrew from the Franconia Mennonite congregation soon after 1879. These persons formed the nucleus of a new religious group. When a new bank was organized at Pottstown during the early ministry of Andrew S. Mack a number of Hereford Mennonites asked Mack if Mennonites could be bank directors. The matter was considered at conference and it was advised to keep aloof from such positions. But when a new bank was organized at Souderton in 1879 the Mennonites did take an active part in the organization. Among the number was Charles Godshall. But a little later Godshall withdrew from the banking business and left the church. It is not clear whether he considered the discipline of the church too stringent or too lax. The Franconia Conference does object to Mennonites in any capacity suing at law.

The first preacher for the new group of a few families was Samuel Landis of Quakertown. He first preached for the Evangelical Mennonites but, as the story is told, the Evangelical Mennonites displayed considerable emotionalism in their prayer meetings and on one occasion a stove was upset. William Gehman encouraged spiritual "life" and "fire." But Landis reacted sharply to the disorder at some meetings and charged that this "fire" had a questionable origin. He then forsook the Evangelical Mennonites and began to preach for the Godshall group.

Another preacher to leave the Evangelical Mennonites and follow William Landis was Lewis Taylor.

The most distinguished minister claimed by the Godshall Group was Jonas Y. Schultz, (1829-1914).² Born of Schwenkfelder parents he was of a deeply religious turn of mind. He studied at Freeland Seminary and Millersville Normal School and graduated from Hahnemann Medical College at the age of twenty-one. He practiced medicine only four years.

He was baptized by immersion at Himmelwright's Mill, near Niantic, Pennsylvania, as a young man. Religion soon became the passion of his life. He made a number of preaching tours to Canada and the West. "In

¹ For the history and religious practice of this group the author is indebted to their oldest minister, Isaac Frederick (1861-) of Telford. The interview was given on March 5, 1936.

² See biographical sketch of Schultz in the *1916 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*, pp. 32-34.

the school year of 1870-71 he was a teacher in the Mennonite school at Wadsworth, Ohio, teaching Bible Lore, Bible History, Latin, Methods of Teaching, Penmanship, Reading, Grammar and Music. . . . But most of his spiritual labors were carried on at Milford Square and Quakertown, Pa., in conjunction with the late Samuel Landis, and consisted principally of preaching in house gatherings. Thirty-four years of his life were spent in the home of Samuel Landis, at Quakertown, and the last six years with his nephew at Chapel, Pa."

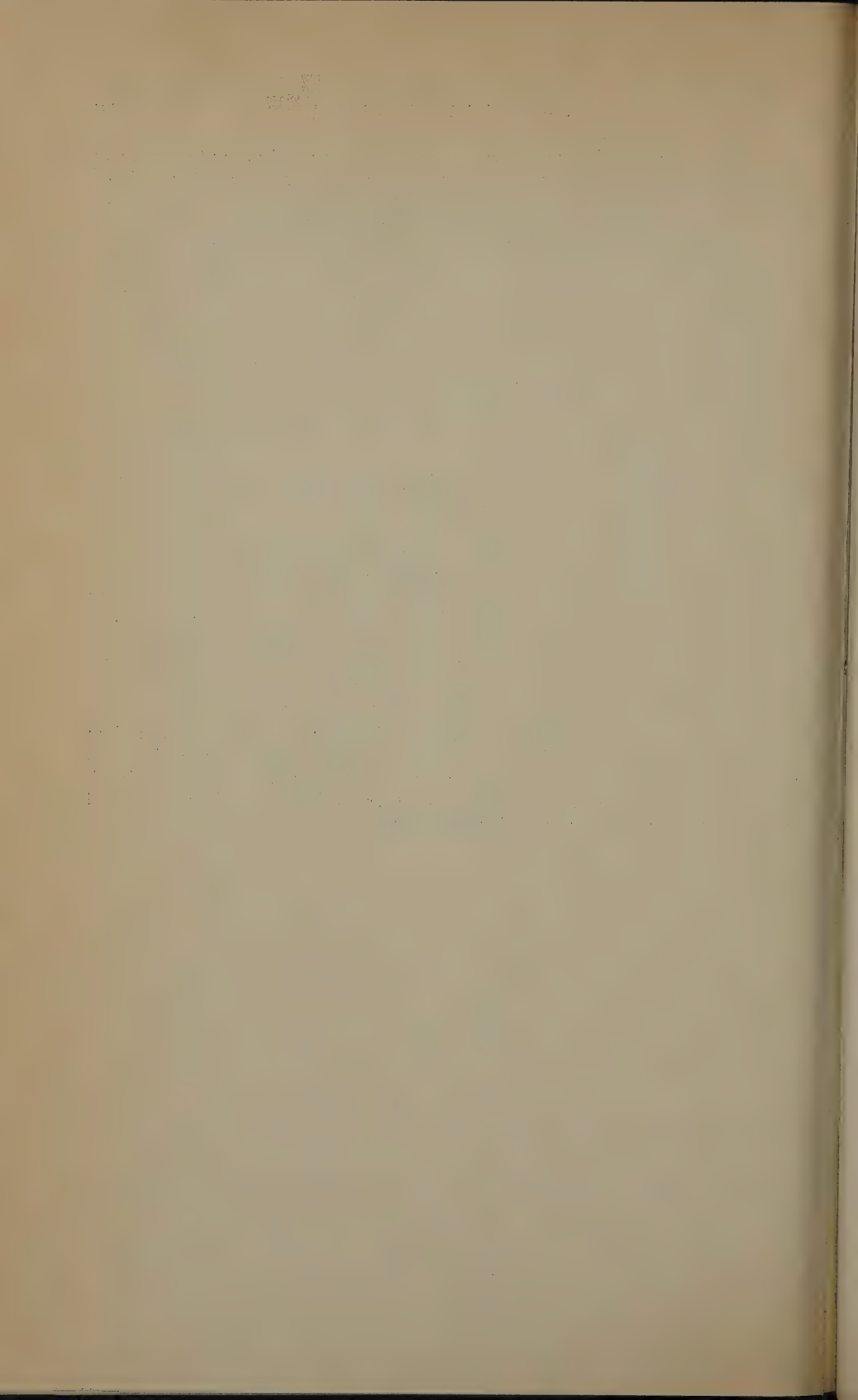
Schultz contributed the Sunday-school lesson comments for John G. Stauffer's *Himmelsmanna*, founded in 1876. And when Stauffer launched *The Manna* in 1879 Schultz was a department editor. He also left a great many unpublished essays. He died in 1914.

The fourth man who took up the work of the ministry was Isaac Frederick of Telford, Pennsylvania.

Charles Taylor, son of Lewis Taylor, also preaches. And Ray, son of Charles Taylor, has also begun to preach.

The group claims to be nonsectarian. There are no ordinations; any one called of God may preach. There is no church organization. The recognized preachers baptize believers in water by whatever method the applicant desires. They have no church activities whatever, not even Sunday school. Communion, open to any Christian, and foot washing are observed at irregular intervals. Some of the women wear a devotional covering and some do not. There is no religious garb, but Jonas Y. Schultz wore a clerical coat. The adherents do not belong to labor unions nor lodges, and do not attend theaters. Yet the group opposes all "man-made rules."

There was a Peter J. Kaufman of Wakarusa, Indiana, whom they recognized as of the same faith. He held meetings for the group of Bucks and Montgomery counties almost every year. Kaufman, who died in 1932, published a nonsectarian periodical, *The Gospel Teacher*. This periodical was highly esteemed by the Godshall group.



Part Six

DOCUMENTARY APPENDIX



I

THE 1773 LETTER TO THE HOLLAND MENNONITES

NOTE: This letter¹ was probably written by Christian Funk (though he signed last) and was signed by two other Mennonite bishops in what is now the Franconia Conference (see Part III for biographical data) in response to a letter requesting information written to these bishops by four European Mennonite ministers, three of Crefeld and one of Utrecht. The European ministers evidently sent the American bishops a book containing the names of Mennonite congregations and ministers in Europe and also some information on European Mennonite faith and practice. Dr. Bender says, "Apparently the compilers of this book wished to include information about the American Mennonites in the next edition, hence addressed themselves to the leaders of the oldest Mennonite communities in America for assistance. From the reply it is clear that the European letter contained at least five questions: (1) Date, source, location, and early history of the first settlement; (2) Reasons for the immigration; (3) Doctrine and Practice of the American Mennonites including such questions as what confessions of faith and books are used, regulation of marriage and the ordinances, support of the ministers, language used in services; (4) The Amish settlements and doctrines; (5) A census of congregations with membership and names of the bishops, ministers, and dates of ordination."

A Dutch version of this letter was bought by Mr. S. W. Pennypacker at auction in Holland. His translation is here given. The Dutch letter was later acquired by the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, but very unfortunately cannot now be located. A manuscript copy of the letter in the original German is in the possession of the Schmidt-Weber family of Worms, Germany. This was published by Dr. Christian Neff in the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender*, Kaiserslautern, Germany, in 1929. There are a few variations between the German text and the English translation of the Dutch version. The German text states that the arrival of the second group of immigrants which occasioned the ordination of William Rittenhouse was in 1698. Pennypacker's translation of the Dutch version gives the year 1690 at this point.

¹ Published by Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, LL.D., *Hendrick Pannebecker, Surveyor of Lands for the Penns, 1674-1754*, Philadelphia, 1894, pages 46-63. Reprinted in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, October, 1929, with additional footnotes by Harold S. Bender. This copy is made from the reprint in the *Review*. The present author is indebted to both the late Governor Pennypacker and to Dr. Bender for some of the footnotes he has added.

Schippak,² Indian Krik,³ and Blen.⁴
 Philadelphia County.
 March 1, 1773

With friendly greeting to our true and much beloved colleagues and brethren, Wynand Peter Wynands, Wopke Molenaar, and Sino Van Abema, at Crefeld, as well as Johannes Cuperus, at Utrecht, together with all members of the community there, wish we all imaginable temporal blessings, but most of all everlasting happiness through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Briefly we inform you that we have safely received your welcome letter with the Name List of our Community and Preachers in Europe from our friend Christian Laetschet, and also we see with great joy and heartfelt pleasure your affection and love therein, as we fully believe and trust. It must indeed delight children of a rich father, and especially where each believes that they are to receive one and the same love and to expect one and the same inheritance, when they meet together; and, so that nothing may happen, count up in writing the great treasures and riches. How much more do we rejoice to have a mutual love and delight in the great love of our common Father and King for us poor sinful men, shown in His Son Jesus Christ, in whose blood we are washed and through whose sufferings we are reconciled to the Father! By which means he himself has established one community. Therefore has he, as he was about to go to his Father, said to his apostles, or commanded them through the authority he had received from his Father in heaven and upon earth, that they should go out in the whole world and preach the Gospel to all men, baptizing those who believed and in their lives maintained what he had commanded them. And love is not the least, but the greatest command.

Therefore, we trust that love for us is the cause of your recent inquiry concerning our religious community in America, in order to learn who have come out of Europe into our land; the time when; how they have arrived here; when the first Mennonites, or defenceless Doopsgezinde⁵ Christians have settled in this part of the world; how they from time to time have progressed; how many they are in number, and other things more. Love compels us to comply with your request as well as we can, but there are more serious difficulties which prevent us from doing it very speedily.

In the first place, we are unlearned people and very deficient in writing. We have only so much learned that we are scarcely in a state to make memoranda for ourselves, and of orderly and skilled composition we know nothing. So that, so far as it is sought to know the great and mighty things of the world, we dare not undertake to comply; but in what concerns the Brethren we shall, with entire willingness of heart, do the best we can.

² Skippack, the home and church of Bishop Andrew Ziegler.

³ Now Franconia; the home and congregation of Bishop Christian Funk.

⁴ Plain; evidently Bishop Isaac Kolb's congregation. (Prior to 1764 he lived on the Landis Brothers' farm, Telford. When he made his will he lived in Gwynedd township (near the Plain meetinghouse).)

⁵ A name given the Mennonites in Holland.

Still, as has been said, there are many causes which make it difficult for us to do, the principal one of which is that our forefathers have left little, or nothing in writing of the origin and progress of our communities. They came poor into the country, and were compelled through hard labor to seek to secure the means of livelihood, and there was little time left for writing and making records of events. Even our preachers have devoted themselves at all times, and the talents they have received from the good God, to serve the communities with all willingness, without receiving for it the least compensation, so that they find it very necessary to give every unoccupied hour to the performance of their duties. There are still other causes; our communities in this country are scattered over two or three hundred miles, and we dwell, so to speak, at one end of the land, where our congregation, as well as that at Germantown, had its commencement. This is the information we have from a certain short account written by one of the first ministers of our community, named Jacob Godschalks⁶ born in the land of Cleev, in a city called Gog. "The beginning or origin," thus run the words of the above said Jacob Godschalks, "of the community of Jesus Christ here at Germantown, who are called Mennonites [Doopsgezinde], took its rise in this way, that some friends out of Holland, and other places in Germany, came here together, and although they did not all agree, since at this time the most were still Quakers,⁷ nevertheless they found it good to have exercises together; but in doing it they were to be regarded as sheep who had no shepherd, and since they still had no preachers, they endeavored to instruct one another. In the year 1690⁸ more friends from Crefeld and elsewhere came into the land, who were also of our Brethren, and added themselves to us and attended our exercises in the house of Isaac Jacobs.⁹ These last-mentioned friends, with the first, found it good, or judged it better for the building up of the community, to choose by a unanimity of votes a preacher and some deacons.¹⁰ Thereupon was William Ruttinghausen,¹¹ born in Mongouer land, chosen preacher, and Jan Neues, of Creveld, as a deacon, and the first-named then entered upon the performance of his duties. On the 8th of October, 1702, they undertook a second election of two preachers, and Jacob Godschalks,⁶ from Gog, and Hans Neues, from Creveld, were chosen preachers. These two last mentioned at first served the community by reading, but afterward a difficulty arose between Hans Neues and Arnold Van Vossen, and, since the first thought that he was wronged, he separated himself from the community and did not again unite with it. In the year 1707, some Brethren came to us out of the Palatinate, who for

⁶ Jacob Godshalk (1670-1763), ordained preacher at Germantown in 1702 and there performed the first American Mennonite baptisms and administered the first communion in 1708. By 1713 he had settled at Skippack where he served as a vigorous leader for fifty years.

⁷ Many Mennonite historians have overlooked this statement.

⁸ The German text here states, 1698.

⁹ Isaac Jacobs van Bebber.

¹⁰ The German text says, "a deacon."

¹¹ William Rittenhouse (d. 1708), the first American Mennonite preacher.

a whole year kept by themselves.¹² The 18th of February, 1708, the first chosen preacher, Willem Ruttinghausen, died, to the great regret of the community. Since now Jacob Godschalks alone served the community,¹³ and the Brethren from the Palatinate had united with us, they considered it necessary to choose, besides, three men as deacons and overseers, which happened the 22d of March, 1708, and there were chosen Isac Van Sinteren, Hendrik Kassel and Coenrad Janz. A month afterward (April 20th), there were besides two preachers chosen—to wit: Herman Casdorp and Martin Kolb. After that we remained some time living in good peace. Meanwhile, some persons presented themselves, in order to be taken into the community through baptism, whereupon the community, then consisting of thirty-three members including the preachers and deacons, having consulted together, ordered that the request of these persons should be complied with, and accordingly the administration of this rite was conducted by Jacob Godschalks and water baptism performed the first time in this land, May 9, 1708. The persons to whom baptism was administered were eleven in number, and our community was increased to forty-five members. The 23d of May we celebrated the suffering and death of our Savior by observing the Lord's Supper as instituted by the Apostles. In 1709, some more Brothers and Sisters came to us out of the Palatinate, so that on the 6th of April, 1712, our community at Germantown, and thence extending to Schippak, was so increased that we had ninety-nine members."

So far goes the narrative of Jacob Godschalks concerning the origin and growth of the Mennonites in Pennsylvania. For the further spreading of our community in the year 1717, many more of our fellow believers came to us from Germany, among whom were some preachers or ministers of the Lord, to-wit: Bens Brechbiel, Johannes Borchhalter, Valentine Klemmer, and others who had been confirmed¹⁴ as ministers. Up to the year 1740, in almost every year, in some more and in some less, have our fellow-believers come to us, the most of those who accepted our confession of faith from the Palatinate, Sweebruggen,¹⁵ Elzas,¹⁶ Upper Rhine and Switzerland. Our community, by God's blessing, has been cared for by such ministers as the Apostle Paul describes, who have administered baptism and the Lord's Supper, and they are now so numerous that we are not in a position to designate them accurately. We cannot designate how many ministers nor how many communities, but according to our calculations, there are at least eighteen confirmed ministers¹⁴ and fifty communities, some of which have more than one hundred and fifty members. But this is not a certain count, and there are also many of them which are not so strong.

¹² There was probably some difference in customs and religious practice between the Crefeld Mennonites and the Palatines.

¹³ The German text here adds, ". . . and he did so only by reading."

¹⁴ German, *bestaetigt*,—a term used in ordaining a bishop. A "confirmed" minister means a bishop. More recently bishops were called "volle" Diener,— "Full" ministers,—ministers with full power to administer the ordinances.

¹⁵ Zweibruecken, in Rhenish Bavaria, Germany.

¹⁶ Alsace, now in France.

Your request goes further, and if the Lord keeps us alive we may yet, in the course of time, be in a situation to give you more specific information.

The reasons that have induced so many of our fellow-believers to come to us are various. It can be given as one reason that William Penn, the lord of this land, having received great freedom from the King of Great Britain, made it known to people everywhere. Now in many places in Europe the inhabitants were not only hard pressed by being compelled to pay heavy taxes, but also they did not enjoy sufficient freedom to serve God according to the considerations of their conscience. And so many preferred to undertake the difficult and long journey to come to us.

Upon coming into this country, they not only enjoy great freedom, but also find that the land is fruitful and that everything of which a farmer has need it produces to overflowing — if he will only work. We have no want of food or raiment, and there are among us even people who are rich. Some, in writing these things to their friends in Europe, and others who have made the journey to Germany for merchandise, have much — yes, too much, extolled the country and given such inducements that many have come here for worldly profit. Other reasons we pass by. So far in answer to your first two questions. The third question concerns the various opinions of our fellow-believers. With regard to our confession of faith, our forefathers have taken the articles adopted on the 21st of April, 1632, at Dordrecht, in Holland,¹⁷ and outside of these we have held to no human regulations, but have taught simply those of the Holy Scriptures and what may further God's honor and man's happiness.¹⁸ And it is to be wished that we may honor the same by our life and walk as our Savior teaches. "Let your light so shine before men," etc.; and the Apostle Peter says: "Add to your faith, virtue," etc.

As to the Amisch,¹⁹ they are many in number; but they are not here near us, and we can give no further information concerning them except only this, that they hold very fast to the outward and ancient institutions.

Concerning the former question as to how many communities there are, we have answered above that we are not in a situation to give definitely the number of our own; and as to the Amisch, we also do not know in what places they dwell among us. However, we shall give you a short account of where ours dwell, namely: Germantown, Schiepack,²⁰ Indian Krik,²¹ Tippron,²² Blen,²³ Grooten Schwamb,²⁴ Lowischenhoff²⁵ and Schulkiel.²⁶ This

¹⁷ The standard Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Church (of America).

¹⁸ The Mennonite Church is not a creedal church.

¹⁹ The Amish take their name from Jacob Ammann. They separated from the Mennonites in Switzerland in 1693-1697. In recent years in America a great many Mennonite and Amish conferences have merged.

²⁰ Skippack.

²¹ Now Franconia.

²² Deep Run.

²³ Plain.

²⁴ Swamp, in southwestern Bucks county.

²⁵ Goshenhoppen (Hereford).

²⁶ Schuylkill is the valley drained by that river.

is the region of the country where we dwell. Further away are Canestogis,²⁷ where are very many and large congregations, Quitophila,²⁸ great and little Schwattara,²⁹ Tolpehokin,³⁰ and on the other side of the river Susquehanna by Yorktown;³¹ great and little Conewago,³² Mannakesie,³³ to Virginia,³⁴ Meriland,³⁵ Schanatore,³⁶ and further to Carolina,³⁷ where are many and large congregations.

Concerning the question how we support ourselves and gain a livelihood, this serves for answer that the most of us are farmers and follow trades. So far as we know, no one among us has yet gone into the business of merchandise carried on by means of ships upon the sea. Our congregations increase rather than diminish. Through God's mercy we enjoy unlimited freedom in both civil and religious affairs. We have never been compelled to bear weapons. With yea and nay we can all testify before our praiseworthy magistrates. We accept no office under the Government because force is used therein. Besides, it is not found good among us that any member of the community should openly, much less secretly, keep an ale-house or inn, because it leads to a great number of irregularities. Concerning marriage, it is not approved nor permitted that any one should marry outside of the community, and in case it occurs, the person, whether Brother or Sister, is notified to withdraw from the fellowship, the brotherly council, the kiss of peace, and the Lord's Supper, until they have made expiation to the community. You further ask whether we have books with Confessions of Faith, and in what number? In the first place, we recognize the Holy Scriptures, especially the Evangelists,³⁸ for our chief rule. Besides, we have the writings of Menno Simons, in German and Dutch; also the *Martyrs' Mirror*, of T. J. van Braght, in the German language which has been printed here in folio,³⁹ and the *Golden Apples*,⁴⁰ the above-mentioned Confession of Faith⁴¹ in the German, Dutch and English languages, and many other books which our old preachers have published and left behind

²⁷ Now Lancaster county.

²⁸ Now Lebanon county.

²⁹ Dauphin county.

³⁰ Western Berks county.

³¹ York in York county.

³² Conewago in York county.

³³ Monocacy in lower Berks county.

³⁴ Is this Page county, Virginia?

³⁵ Maryland.

³⁶ The Shenandoah Valley in Virginia.

³⁷ Little is known of the Carolina Mennonite settlements; see *The Christian Monitor*, March, 1937, pp. 84, 85.

³⁸ Mennonite thinking centers on the person and teaching of Christ. Mennonites literally accept the ethics He laid down for His followers, hence oppose both war and oaths.

³⁹ *Der Blutige Schau-Platz oder Martyrer Spiegel . . .*, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, 1748, 49.

⁴⁰ *Gueldene Aepfel*, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, 1745.

⁴¹ The (1632) Dortrecht Confession of Faith, printed in English at Amsterdam for American Mennonite distribution in 1712 and reprinted in Philadelphia in 1727.

for us, as Joost Hendricks, Willem Wynands, Jacob Denner and many others. For the present the Scripture is preached in the German language in all of our congregations;⁴² and in the most with great care, reverence and love, as the Apostle directs.

The fifth question we cannot answer, because we dwell far apart, and few can undertake the task to write to other preachers, and to many of them writing is troublesome, and because your request would only cause many of us to consider whether we would not commit a sin if we should undertake to count the people.⁴³ Look at the history of King David. Still we regard you with complete love, and believe that you have no other thought and seek no other end than to honor the Almighty God and Father through his blessing and mercy that so many souls believing in his Son Jesus Christ and obeying them, have been found dwelling in places that might be regarded as the farthest ends of the earth. Although the counting of the people has been mentioned, we shall not neglect to endeavor to secure further and better information in order to strengthen our faith and increase our love.

In order to put our exchange of letters upon a sure footing, as it may not be sufficiently safe to send them to Crefeld, it is important that you give us the name of a man in Rotterdam, to whom we may direct our communications. The letters you write to us may be addressed to Andreas Ziegler in Schiepak, under care of David Deschler, merchant, in Philadelphia, or Johannes Wuster there, and they will come all right. We are inclined, with all our ability, to serve you to the extent of our little capacity. We hope you will give us some information concerning the ordinances in your communities; also concerning marriage, whether it is conducted by you otherwise than it is by us; and what is the custom with respect to the Lord's Supper, whether the bread is broken and distributed by the preachers,⁴⁴ and whether the members receive the bread all sitting at one table, also, information as to whether you keep up the observance of foot washing,⁴⁵ and what are your ordinances with regard to the choosing of preachers, whether they are chosen out of the congregation and whether the whole congregation take part in it?⁴⁶

⁴² There has been an almost complete change from German to English in the Franconia district during the present generation.

⁴³ American Mennonites have only recently overcome their aversion to keeping records.

⁴⁴ In Mennonite history there may have been a diversity in practice as to who serves communion. The usual person is the bishop. But in 1630 the Swiss Brethren met near Hoffingen and point four of their decisions was, "Anyone who has been appointed, who has a good testimony and is in the confidence of the people, such an one may take charge of communion, baptism, marrying, punishing, and expelling, if no ordained bishop should be on hand, who might have been hindered for cause."

⁴⁵ Foot washing, a literal observance of John 13:1-17, was practiced in some places among the European Mennonites and in other places was not. In Franconia it was little observed before 1875. Even now it is practiced at Preparatory services, the Saturday preceding communion.

⁴⁶ Does this indicate diversity of practice among the Mennonites of the (Franconia) district?

Since, as has been said, we are simple people and unaccustomed to writing and in many other things unskilled, we should like to ask what the letters mean upon the picture of preacher Gerhardus Van Hyningen at Amsterdam, which stand thus: "A. L. M. & Ph. D.," and what is meant by the word Emeritus.⁴⁷ Further, we should like to know whether there is any division between you and the Waterlanders and Frisians, and whether there is any division between the above-mentioned and the United Flemish and Waterlanders, and in what the division consists, and if there is a division whether they seek to bear themselves toward each other with love?

In conclusion, we again heartily greet you and ask you to accept our poor composition in love. Let us ask God, the father of love, for wisdom, understanding and knowledge that all may be in furtherance of his praise and the welfare of the community, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Meanwhile we remain, united in love, your Brethren and fellow-preachers.

Andreas Ziegler,
Isac Kolb,
Christian Funk.

Herewith follow the names of the preachers, both when they were selected and confirmed, so far as we know them at this time. In the following arrangement each separation makes one community.

To the community at Schiepak⁴⁸ belong also Germantown and Matetschen.⁴⁹ The preachers are: Andreas Ziegler, chosen⁵⁰ 1746, confirmed⁵¹ May 30, 1762; Jacob Schumacher, chosen 1746; Hendk Kolb, chosen 1752; Dielman Kolb, chosen 1752.

Indian Krik⁵² and Blen,⁵³ to which belong also Solford,⁵⁴ Rakkill⁵⁵ and Schwamin,⁵⁶ where the preachers are: Isac Kolb, chosen 1744, confirmed 1761; Christian Funk, chosen 1756, confirmed 1769; Samuel Bechtel,⁵⁷ Jacob Landis; Jacob Funk; and Abraham Gehman.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ Perhaps a gentle rebuke that the Dutch Mennonites were "assuming the vanities of the world."

⁴⁸ Skippack. The churches are grouped in "bishop-districts."

⁴⁹ Methacton, now usually called Worcester.

⁵⁰ Ordained to the ministry.

⁵¹ Ordained bishop.

⁵² Now called Franconia; formerly also called "Indian Field."

⁵³ Plain.

⁵⁴ Salford.

⁵⁵ Rockhill.

⁵⁶ Schwamin (?) — The most likely church is Lexington, but the name Schwamin is obscure.

⁵⁷ Bechtel died in 1802 and was buried at "Rakkill." Rockhill was sometimes called "Bechtel's."

⁵⁸ Also buried at Rockhill. "Gehmans'" was the usual name for Rockhill until recent years.

Diep Ron,⁵⁹ (to which belong Berkosen)⁶⁰ on the river Delaware and Anfrieds.⁶¹ The preachers are: Abraham Schwartz, chosen 1738, confirmed 1756; Abraham Landis, chosen 1758; Jacob Meyer, chosen 1758;⁶² Samuel Meyer, chosen 1769.⁶²

Grooten Schwamb,⁶³ to which belong Sackern,⁶⁴ Lower Milford in two places,⁶³ Hosensack,⁶⁵ Leahay⁶⁶ and Term.⁶⁷ The preachers are: Jacob Meyer, chosen 1752, confirmed 1763; Hendk. Funk, chosen 1768;⁶⁸ Hendk. Bär, chosen 1771; Peter Meyer, chosen 1773; George Akerman; Michael Moselman.

Schulkiel.⁶⁹ Meetings are held there in three places, but there is only one community. The preachers are: Martin Bächtel, chosen 1739, confirmed 1758; David Langenecker; Joseph Showalter; Johannes Langenecker, chosen 1772.

Of Canestogo⁷⁰ and the surrounding places, we will only give a few preachers and their names, and in course of time will endeavor to prepare

⁵⁹ Deep Run.

⁶⁰ The parentheses were added by the present author. Berkosen is "Perkasie," but Deep Run is much nearer the Delaware than "Perkasie" (now Blooming Glen), so the phrase, "to which belong Berkosen," is likely parenthetical.

⁶¹ Unknown; likely means "at Freeds'." Was Doylestown ever called Freeds'?

⁶² Probably a Blooming Glen minister.

⁶³ "Grooten Schwamb," and "Lower Milford in two places" are likely East Swamp, West Swamp, and Upper Milford now. The East and West Swamp churches are now in Milford township, Bucks county. Upper and Lower Milford townships, Lehigh county, were divided in 1852; previously they were called Upper Milford (Lehigh county). In 1773 Milford township, Bucks county was probably called Lower Milford and in it were the East and West Swamp churches. The present Upper Milford Church (Lehigh county) was then in Northampton county (which had been created from Bucks in 1752).

The Swamp district was lost to the Franconia Conference in the division of 1847. The Swamp and Springfield congregations are now in the district of Mingler, Clemmer, and Ruth.

⁶⁴ Saucon.

⁶⁵ Hosensack; no trace of a deed or meetinghouse or even of an abandoned Mennonite cemetery can be found near Hosensack today.

⁶⁶ Lehigh,—likely the Siegfried meetinghouse in Northampton, Pennsylvania, along the Lehigh river.

⁶⁷ Durham; likely Springfield which is located in a branch of the Durham valley.

⁶⁸ Excommunicated for holding the same views as his brother, Christian Funk. Later moved to Virginia.

⁶⁹ The Schuylkill valley has only one church remaining, Vincent. But where is the Hereford Church in this list? Is it also included in Schuylkill? The term "Manantant" seemed to include Hereford, Coventry, and Vincent; might "Schuylkill" be here used in a similar broad sense? Hereford is in the Perkiomen valley,—which drains into the Schuylkill.

And where are Towamencin and Providence? Perhaps Towamencin was simply considered a branch of Skippack or was overlooked altogether. The same holds good for Providence.

⁷⁰ The writers now turn to Lancaster but their knowledge of Conestoga is very meager. Many names are misspelled; e. g., Hirsch for Hershey, Kryter for Kreider, Herp for Erb, and also Hirschel for Hershey.

a more circumstantial account. For the present, we will only give these confirmed preachers:⁷¹ Bens Hirsch, Bens Schantz, Martin Böhm, Tobias Kryter, Friedrich Kauffman, Michael Kauffman, and Hans Schants, junior.

Other preachers are the following, though probably not more than one-sixth of them, since, as we hear, meetings are held in more than forty places. The names of the preachers whom we know are: Johan Bär, Johan Herp, Christian Hirschel, Bens Hirschel, junior, and Martin Huber.

⁷¹ Bishops; the writers list six Franconia bishops and seven (known) bishops in Lancaster.

II

A LETTER FROM FOUR MENNONITE MINISTERS OF ALTONA, GERMANY, TO THE GERMAN- TOWN MENNONITES, 1702

NOTE: William Rittenhouse was chosen as the first American Mennonite minister in 1690 (?) at Germantown, Pennsylvania. Since only bishops can baptize or administer communion in the Mennonite Church the Germantown Mennonites soon wrote to the European Mennonites asking that a delegate be sent to Germantown to ordain a bishop. The appeal was sent to the ministers and bishops of the Mennonite Church at Altona, near Hamburg, Germany. The reply was addressed to Claes Berends of the Germantown Mennonite Church. Both this letter of appeal and the reply have been lost. However an extract of the reply was made at the time the reply was written. This extract, written in the Dutch language on a piece of foolscap 12 by 20 inches in size and signed by the four officiating ministers of the Altona Church has fortunately been preserved in the Archive of the Mennonite Church in Hamburg-Altona. The original Dutch title, found on the back side of the sheet containing the copy is: "Extract von den brief aan Claes Beerends, op Pensilvanien vervolgens bedieninge van Doop & Avondmaal aldaer . . . 'door 4 geprobiert.'" About thirty-five years ago Pastor Heinrich van der Smissen translated the extract into the German language. This German translation is here reprinted.¹

Ao 1702: MARTIO

Weiter gebt Ihr in Eurem Schrieben einige bekümmerte Bedenken kund über die Bedienung der geistlichen Taufe und das heiligen Nachtmals, wie Euch darin zu handeln gebühre, wenn es vorkommt, sie zu bedienen, weil doch nach der hiezulande gebräuchlichen Ordnung keine Aeltesten² vorhanden sind, um dieselben zu bedienen oder Euch und andere mit Handauflegung dazu zu ordinieren. Darüber ist hier bei uns im Lehrdienst gesprochen worden. Um zu diesen Zwecke jemanden nach Pennsilvanien zu entsenden, ist die Reise zu weit und zu beschwerlich. Also sieht unser Lehrdienst darin keinen anderen Ausweg als dass Ihr den Gemeindegliedern die Notwendigkeit der Bedienung vorstellt und die Freunde ermahnt, eine Zeitlang ernstlich zu beten, dass der Herr die dort vorhandenen Lehrer mit gnädigen Augen anzublicken beliebe und die Schwachheiten in ihnen uebersehe und solche Tauchligkeit doch in ihnen zu wirken beliebe wie (zur Feier von) solchen heiligen Zeichen erforderlich, damit sie also in Treue

¹ Reprinted from *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, October, 1931, pp. 284, 285.

² In the Pennsylvania German, *Aeltesten* now means "deacons," but in this extract it means "bishops."

des Herzens und Gemuets zur Ehre Gottes und ihres Naechstens Seligkeit sie bedienen und vollziehen moegen. Denn die Notwendigkeit dieser Dinge muss aller gemeinen kirchlichen Ordnung vorgehen, ehe sie unterbleiben duerften. Wie wir davon auch in der ersten Kirche Beispiele haben, da das Gebot des Herrn Christus, die Taufe zu bedienen, zuerst wohl allein den zwolf Aposteln befohlen wurde, (naemlich) bei der Bedienung des Evangeliums die Taufe an allen zu vollziehen die glaeubig wurden, Matth. 28, Mark. 16. Weshalb auch Paulus von sich selber sagt, Er sei nicht gesandt zu taufen, womit er sagen will: Wie die zwolf auserwaehlten Apostel; dennoch hat er als die Gelegenheit der Notwendigkeit sich ereignete trotzdem einige getauft. So auch der Diakon Philippus hat den Kaemmerer aus Mohrenland getauft, auch viele zu Samaria, als sie seinen Predigten glaubten, Apost. Gesch. 8. Und dies ist hiervon auch unsere, des Lehrdienstes, Ansicht und Meinung, da wir nicht zweifeln wenn es in der Furcht des Herrn unternommen und getan wird, so wuerde es den Herrn gefaellig sein, und seine Mitwirkung werde allerseits erfunden werden.³

Pieter Verhelle
Jacob van Campen

Gerrit Roosen
Jan de Lanoi

³ William Rittenhouse was finally convinced that he should go ahead with the administration of baptism and communion but he died before he was able to thus serve as a bishop.

III

THE 1728 PETITION FOR PROTECTION AGAINST THE INDIANS¹

We think it fit to address your Excellency for Relief, your Excellency must know That we have sufered and is like to sufer By the Ingions they have fell upon ye Back Inhabitators about Falkners Swamp & New Cosha-hopin Therefore We the humble Petitioners with our Wives and Children Do humbly Beg of your Excellency to Take it into Consideration and Relieve us the Petitioners hereof whos Lives Lies at Stake With us and our poor Wives & Children that is more to us than Life Therefore We the humble Petitioners hereof Do Desire an Answer from your Excellency By ye Bearer With Speed So no more at present from your poor afflicted People whose names are here subscribed :

John Roberts
Jno. Pawling
Henry Pannebeckers
Wm. Lane
John Jacobs
Isaac Dubois
Israell Morris
Benyamen Fry
Jacob op den Graef
Johannes Dehlb
Richard Adams
George Boger
Adam Sollom
Dielman Kolb
Martin Kolb
Gabriel Showler (Schuler)
Anthony Halmon
John Isaac Klein
Hans Detweiler
William Bitts
Hubbard Castle
Henry Fentlinger
Christian Weber
Gerhart de Heffe
Lorentz Bingeman
Henrich Kolb

¹ Taken from an article by Dr. William J. Hinke, "A Hundred Years of History In the Old Goshenhoppen Reformed Church, 1730-1830," published in *The Perkiomen Region*, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, April 1, 1926, pp. 1, 2. The situation faced by these petitioners was not very grave, but the list furnishes a good census of the Perkiomen Valley. Many of the men who signed were Mennonites.

John Fret (Fried)
Paul Fret
Wm. Smith
Peter Rambo
David Young
Christophel Schmit
Garret Clemons
Johannes Reichardt
Matthias Tyson
Peter Johnson
Yost Hyt (Heid)
Christian Aliback (Allebach)
Hans Rife (Reiff)
Daniel Stawford
Abraham Schwartz
Johann Valentine Kratz
John Johnson
Colly Hofelfinger
Nicholas Holdiman
Michael Sigler
Christian Stoner
Johannes Gerber
John Holdiman
Claus Johnson
Richard Jacob
Hermannes Kusters
Peter Bun
Jacob Eugener
Hans Woerman
Conrad Custor
Jacob Wernike
Christian Neuschwanger
Conrad Reiff
Jacob Kolb
Hans Willy Bergy
John Mior (Meier)
Nicholas Hicks
Johannes Lischer
Jacob Shimer
Michael Cross
Peter Rife
George Rife
George Mire
Bastian Smith
Edward Indehaven
Christian Croll
Jacob Creator (Grether)
Jacob Stoford
Henry Stoford
Paul Fret, Junior

IV

THE 1775 DECLARATION TO THE COLONIAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA¹

A short and sincere Declaration, To our Honorable Assembly, and all others in high or low Station of Administration, and to all Friends and Inhabitants of this Country, to whose Sight this may come, be they ENGLISH or GERMANS.

In the first Place we acknowledge us indebted to the most high God, who created Heaven and Earth, the only good Being, to thank him for all his great Goodness and manifold Mercies and Love through our Savior Jesus Christ, who is come to save the Souls of Men, having all Power in Heaven and on Earth.

Further we find ourselves indebted to be thankful to our late worthy Assembly, for their giving so good an Advice in these troublesome Times to all Ranks of People in Pennsylvania, particularly in allowing those, who, by the Doctrine of our Savior Jesus Christ, are persuaded in their Consciences to love their Enemies, and not to resist Evil, to enjoy the Liberty of their Conscience, for which, as also for all the good Things we enjoyed under their Care, we heartily thank that worthy Body of Assembly, and all high and low in Office, who have advised to such a peacefull Measure, hoping and confiding that they, and all others entrusted with Power in this hitherto blessed Province, may be moved by the same Spirit of Grace, which animated the first Founder of this Province, our late worthy Proprietor William Penn, to grant Liberty of Conscience to all its Inhabitants, that they may in the great and memorable Day of Judgment be put on the right Hand of the just Judge, who judgeth without Respect of Person, and hear of him these blessed Words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, Ec. What ye have done unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done unto me*, among which Number (*i. e., the least of Christ's Brethren*) we by his Grace hope to be ranked; and every Lenity and Favour shewn to such tender conscienced, although weak Followers of this our blessed Saviour, will not be forgotten by him in that great Day.

The Advice to those who do not find Freedom of Conscience to take up arms, that they ought to be helpfull to those who are in Need and distressed Circumstances, we receive with Chearfulness towards all Men of what Station they may be—it being our Principle to feed the Hungry and give the Thirsty Drink;—we have dedicated ourselves to serve all Men in every Thing that can be helpful to the Preservation of Men's Lives, but we find no Freedom in giving, or doing, or assisting in any Thing by which

¹ Copied from a photostatic reproduction in the Library of the Mennonite Historical Society of Goshen College.

Men's Lives are destroyed or hurt.—We beg the Patience of all those who believe we err in this Point.

We are always ready, according to Christ's Command to Peter, to pay the Tribute, that we may offend no Man, and so we are willing to pay Taxes, *and to render unto Caesar those Things that are Caesar's and to God those Things that are God's*, although we think ourselves very weak to give God his due Honor, he being a Spirit and Life, and we only Dust and Ashes.

We are also willing to be subject to the higher Powers, and to give in the manner Paul directs us;—*for he beareth the Sword not in vain, for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil.*

This Testimony we lay down before our worthy Assembly, and all other Persons in Government, letting them know, that we are thankfull as above-mentioned, and that we are not at Liberty in Conscience to take up Arms to conquer our Enemies, but rather to pray to God, who has Power in Heaven and on Earth, for US and THEM.

We also crave the Patience of all the Inhabitants of this Country,—what they think to see clearer in the Doctrine of the blessed Jesus Christ, we will leave to them and God, finding ourselves very poor; for Faith is to proceed out of the Word of God, which is Life and Spirit, and a Power of God, and our Conscience to be instructed by the same therefore we beg for Patience.

Our small Gift, which we have given, we gave to those who have Power over us, that we may not offend them, as Christ taught us by the Tribute Penny.

We heartily pray that God would govern all Hearts of our Rulers, be they high or low, to meditate those good Things which will pertain to OUR and THEIR Happiness.

The above Declaration, signed by a number of Elders and Teachers of the Society of Menonists, and some of the German Baptists, presented to the Honorable House of Assembly on the 7th Day of November, 1775, was most graciously received.

V

THE 1796 LETTER FROM FRANCONIA TO GERMANTOWN¹

The grace and blessing of God together with a hearty, cordial greeting to all to whose hands these lines may come.

May God give you much grace and peace through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord; may he strengthen us in our pilgrimage that through the power of the Spirit we may be grounded and rooted, enabling us to know the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of Christ, which is better than all knowledge.

We are, thank God, all well, and wish that this writing may also find you in bodily and spiritual health.

So much with greetings from your friend and well-wisher in the bonds of brotherly love.

October 27, 1796.

Jacob Oberholtz

frankony taunschip, Montgom.

(The following postscript is added:)

First of all a friendly greeting to father and mother, or to whose hands these lines may come.

I would inform you that on November 6, Jacob Gross will come to you to conduct your services, the Lord willing. As concerning myself, I am well and my wish is that these few lines may likewise find you well.

Fare ye well, So much in brief from your son.

A. (?) Kolb.

Further I would inform you that lot has been cast to decide which of the ministers shall conduct the services in Germantown, and also the time when each one shall serve.

First, December 4, 1796 Abraham Oberholtzer
January 1, 1797 Henrich Pannebecker
January 29, 1797 David Ruth
February 26, 1797 Joseph Schowalder
March 26, 1797 Henrich Hunsicker
April 23, 1797 Jacob Oberholtzer
May 21, 1797 John Hoch
June 18, 1797 Abrah. Wissmer
July 16, 1797 Jacob Gross
August 13, 1797 Matthes Pannabecker
September 10, 1797 Christian Haldeman
October 8, 1797 Johannes Berge

¹ The text of the letter is taken from the *1911 Mennonite Year Book and Almanac*. It was probably translated by N. B. Grubb. See p. 94, footnote no. 8.

VI

THE GERMANTOWN ANTISLAVERY PROTEST OF 1688¹

NOTE: Both Mennonites and Quakers have claimed the honor of writing this historic document. Hendricks and Dirk op den Graeff were Quakers. Abraham op den Graeff had been a Mennonite, was then a Quaker but seems to have later returned to the Mennonites. Pastorius had been a Lutheran Pietist but had also cast in his lot with the Quakers. As far as the *immediate* religious affiliation of the signers is concerned the Quakers certainly receive the honor.

But should one attempt to account for the spirit which motivated the writing of the protest the answer might be different. Mennonites did not hold slaves. While "as late as 1696 the Yearly Meeting at Philadelphia advised Friends to be careful to bring their slaves to meeting with their masters."² Pastorius owed his scruples against slavery to his Pietistic thinking and the others certainly imbibed their spirit from their Mennonite background. Further, the Quakers were not willing to act on this protest. The "Monthly Meeting held at Richard Worrels" found ". . . it so weighty that we think it not expedient for us to meddle with it here . . ."³ The Quarterly Meeting at Philadelphia (June 4, 1688) passed it on to the "Yearly Meating" as ". . . a thing of too great A weight for this meeting to determine."³ At the Yearly Meeting at Burlington (September 5, 1688), ". . . It was adjudged not to be so proper for this Meeting to give a Positive Judgement in the Case, It having so General a Relation to many other Parts, and therefore at Present they forbear It."³

"This is to ye Monthly Meeting Held at Richard Worrell's.

"These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men Body, as followeth. Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearfull & fainthearted are many on sea, when they see a strange vessel being afraid it should be a Turck, and they should be tacken and sold for Slaves into Turkey. Now what is this better done as Turcks doe? yea rather it is worse for them, w^{ch} say they are Christians: for we hear that ye most part of such Negers are brought heither against their will & consent, and that many of them are stollen. Now tho' they are black we cannot conceive there is

¹ Dr. William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, 1935, pp. 297-299.

² Quoted from Davis, *History of Bucks County*, by Dr. C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania* . . . , Norristown, Pa., 1929, pp. 109-110.

³ Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall doe to all men, licke as we will be done our selves : macking no difference of what generation, descent or Colour they are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? Here is liberty of Conscience w^{ch} is right and reasonable; here ought to be likewise liberty of y^e body, except of evildoers, w^{ch} is an other case. But to bring men hither, or to robb and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sake; and here there are those oppressed w^{ch} are of a black Colour. And we, who know that men must not comitt adultery, some doe comitt adultery in others, separating wives from their housbands, and giving them to others and some sell the children of those poor Creatures to other men. Oh! doe consider well this thinge, you who doe it, if you would be done at this manner? and if it is done according to Christianity? you surpass Holland & Germany in this thing. This mackes an ill report in all those Countries of Europe, where they hear off, that y^e Quackers doe here handel men, licke they handel there y^e Cattel; and for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither, and who shall maintaine this your cause, or plaid for it, Truely we can not do so, except you shall inform us better hereoff, viz: that christians have liberty to practise this thinge. Pray! What thing in the world can be done worse towards us then if men should robb or steal us away & sell us for slaves to strange Countries; separating housbands from their wives & children. Being now this is not done at that manner, we will be done at, therefore we contradict & are against this traffick of men-body. And we who profess that is is not lawfull to steal, must likewise avoid to purchase such things as are stollen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible and such men ought to be delivred out of y^e hands of y^e Robbers & sett free as well as in Europe. Then is Pensilvania to have a good report, instead it hath now a bad one for this sake in other Countries. Especially whereas y^e Europeans are desirous to know in what manner y^e Quakers doe rule in their Province; & most of them doe loock upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say is don evill?

"If once these slaves (w^{ch} they say are so wicked and stubborn men:) should joint themselves, fight for their freedom, and handel their masters & mastrisses, as they did handel them before; will these Masters & mastrisses tacke the sword at hand & warr against these poor slaves, licke we are able to believe, some will not refuse to doe? Or have these Negers not as much right to fight for their freedom, as you have to keep them slaves?

"Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad? and in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire & require you hereby lovingly, that you may informe us here in, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians have such a liberty to do so, to the end we shall be satisfied in this point, & satisfie likewise our good friends & acquaintances in our natif Country, to whose it is a terrour, or fairfull thing that men should be handeld so in Pensilvania.

"This is from our Meeting at Germantown held y^e 18. of the 2. month⁴
1688. to be delivred to the Monthly Meeting at Richard Worrell's.

garret hendericks
derick op de graeff
Francis Daniell Pastorius
Abraham op Den graef."

⁴ April.

VII

FAREWELL LETTER OF BISHOP JACOB GROSS TO THE CHURCHES OF HIS DISTRICT, 1810¹

My last sincere words to the Church, whom I must now leave, among whom I, as an unworthy servant, preached the word, especially the churches at Deep Run, Perkasio² and New Britain.³ Brethren and sisters and others: I embrace you in the arms of love, precious, blood-bought souls; I regret that I must leave you under the circumstances of which the Lord spake; and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, but he that shall endure to the end shall be saved, Matt. 24:12. O love! O indispensable love to God and His Word, how little room findest thou in the human heart towards Thee and Thy Word, towards friend and foe! O love of the world! O lust of the eye, and lust of the flesh! O pride of life, how high hast thou risen up! But farewell! This is my last admonition to you, written with my dying hand, therefore repent; come diligently to the public meeting and hear the word of God; love your teachers and ministers, so shall both they and you be strengthened, and if not, the candlestick shall be taken away altogether. No more. Any brother who is able to read so that he may be understood by all, may read this before the Church, as it is of interest to all of them.

December 7th, 1810.

Jacob Gross.

¹ Daniel K. Cassel, *History of the Mennonites*, Philadelphia, 1888, pp. 244, 245. Gross died December 12, 1810.

² Now called Blooming Glen.

³ Doylestown was then in New Britain township.

VIII

A LETTER FROM BISHOP HENRY HUNSICKER (1752-1836) OF SKIPPACK TO CHRISTIAN HERR OF PEQUEA, 1816¹

November 30th, 1816.

Highly esteemed brother, I received your letter of the 23rd. We are in the enjoyment of good bodily health, and thank God for his paternal love, and wish, as a sincere and friendly greeting, that you may prosper according to the good pleasure of God, both temporally and spiritually. May the dear Savior graciously inspire you with his Holy Spirit, that your spiritual eyes may possess that needful keenness of sight which will enable you to prove the spirits, however disguised they may be. Believe me, dear brother, if I had the wings of an eagle, I should already have visited you personally, since my return home; however, in spirit I have often been with you. My prayers and petitions often ascend to the throne of God, that he may direct the good work, which he commenced in you to his glory and to your salvation. Amen.

Should I in some measure, open my heart to you, dear brother, I would say that I believe, in the first place, that some have been re-baptized to them² who deceive themselves, saying that they received their first baptism, without conviction and without penitence. In the second place their forbidding to hear other denominations preach is certainly a spirit of sectarianism of which the apostle plainly speaks, Col. 2:18, to the end of the chapter. Thirdly, they lack charity. Read I Cor. 13; Jn. 13:34, 35 and there are many other passages which I have not room to quote. Fourthly, I do not believe that since Jesus ascended to heaven the gospel has been preached to the whole world as a testimony; for when this is done then will the end be. Fifthly, what they claim that the ministers of the Old Church, as they call them, do not preach true repentance and regeneration is without foundation. Sixthly, though I admit, that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the church was of one mind, and that they were anointed with the Holy Ghost, I do not believe that there were no spots or blemishes. This may be seen when we read the Acts of the Apostles. I do not look for such a church [without spot or blemish] among us, and I do not believe it will be found among them. In the church militant, such a church in the full sense of the term, will not be found. May God grant that our names may be found in the book of life, in the church triumphant which John saw in the Spirit, and which no man could number, from all nations, people and tongues, standing before the throne and clothed in white garments.

Dear brother, You desire me to inform you of the principal doctrines of the Christian church on earth. Christ, the Son of the Living God, came

¹ John F. Funk, *The Mennonite Church and Her Accusers*, Elkhart, Indiana, 1878, pp. 89-91.

² In this paragraph Hunsicker deals with the Reformed Mennonite Church.

to us in this vale of sorrow and of tears, to seek sinners and save them, and this power of the salvation of Jesus, reaches all who believe in him; he is the Author and Finisher of our faith. I believe that Jesus, the founder of his church, will be with his church—that is, with those who have learned meekness and humility in the school of Christ—and co-operate with them even unto the end of the world. Read Matt. 5:1-12, and also the 18th chapter, and you will see what Jesus requires of us, and how he sent out his disciples to teach the people, and to baptize the believing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them.

But, dear brother, It just occurred to me, why thus write to one who himself is taught of God? I sincerely desire to see you with us. I have few unoccupied days. I have this week already baptized nine and cast two lots [chose ministers, bishops or deacons by lot and ordained them]. Next Thursday there are to be two others cast, and in a week, a day of fasting and prayer³ has been appointed. On the 8th of December, if the Lord will, there are thirty-three to be baptized with us. How glad I should be to see you with us. I remain your sincere well wisher, and may the grace of God be with you and all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Henry Hunsicker.

³ An early practice which has been lost.

IX

A LETTER OF JOHN H. OBERHOLTZER TO FRIENDS IN GERMANY, 1849¹

NOTE: Dr. Harold S. Bender of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, purchased the following letter from Mr. Emil Würz, a Mennonite of the village of Biedesheim, Rhenish Palatinate, South Germany, in July, 1936. The letter gives no indication of the addressee. It was at one time in the possession of the Schmidt-Weber family of Worms a. Rhein and is a family heirloom. It must therefore have been addressed to one of the ancestors of the present family with whom Oberholtzer had become acquainted through a third party. The manuscript consists of four sheets of foolscap paper, written on both sides. The sheets measure roughly 7½ by 12½ inches. The letter is written in a beautiful hand in German script and is very well preserved. It is now the property of the Mennonite Historical Library of Goshen College.

Oberholtzer naturally puts himself in the best possible light but unfortunately thereby gives a partisan account of the schism in which he was the leading figure. His sharp criticism of the Mennonite ministry prior to 1847, though no doubt containing some truth, is certainly unsympathetic, if not definitely biased. The letter, however, is quite interesting and is of historical value, having been written only a year and four months after the final break in the Franconia Conference.

Nieder Milford Taunship Bucks Cauntty Staat Pennsylvanien
Februar den 7 ten 1849

Vielgeliebte Brüder und Glaubensgenossen in dem Herrn Jesu.

Ich will mich jetzt unterwinden um meine Gedanken so gut mir Gott Kraft und Beystand schenkt an meine Europäische Mitbrüder mitzutheilen. Es ist zwar, in gewisser Hinsicht, ein etwas schwieriges Vornehmen von mir, dieweil ich so wenig von unsern Lieben Glaubensgenossen der Mennonitten Gemeinschaft, und ihren Verhältnissen in Europa weis, aber dennoch dringt mich das Gefühl der Bruderliebe alle etwaige Schwierigkeiten zu übersteigen, und mit der Feder einen Versuch zu machen um etwas von euch zu hören oder zu erfahren.

Vorerst sey euch mein Herzenswunsch kund, welcher darin besteht, nämlich: dass wir gemeinschaftliche Antheil haben mögen an der grossen Gnade Gottes, geoffenbahrt in der Menschwerdung des Sohnes-Gottes. Ich könnte freylich manche irdische Glück-wünsche an euch thun vor allem andern, aber das ist einmal nicht meine Absicht, dann der grosse Welt Erlöser hat gesagt "Trachtet am ersten nach dem Reich Gottes und nach seiner Gerechtigkeit, so wird euch alles zufallen." Diese wenig Worte unsers hochgelobten Meisters sind so vielsagend dass man Bücher über deren Inhalt schreiben könnte dann wann der Mensch einmal mit Ernst nach dem Reiche

¹ Reprinted, through the kindness of Dr. Bender, from the April, 1937, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Gottes trachtet dann fällt durch solches darnach zutrachten schon alles ungerechte auf seiten des Menschen hinweg. In solchem Trachten nach dem Reiche Gottes kann auch die allgemeine Busse verstanden werden. Versteht sich von sich selbst dass der Herr nicht wohnen kann in einer Seele "der Sünde" oder dem sünden Dienst unterworfen, dann der Teufel hat sein werk in den Kindern des Unglaubens. Ein Mensch wird wohl ohne Glauben nichts zu wegen bringen woran Gott Freude haben kann, dann das Tichten und Trachten ist allezeit Böses bis zur Sinnes-Anderung welche sich in der Wiedergeburt offenbart. Diese unbegreifliche Veränderung kann ohne Glauben nicht geschehen, deswegen ist es unmöglich Gott zu gefallen ohne Glauben. Sobald der Mensch einmal dem Buchstaben aufrichtig Gehör gibt, und fleissig die innere Überzeugungen welche durch dass ewige Wort in der Seele gewirkt werden, oder welche durch dass geschriebene Wort und Kraft des H. Geistes hervor gerufen werden, acht hat, und lässt sich willig durch solche Triebe leiten, so wird der Satan bald fliehen müssen und der Einzug beydes, Vaters und Sohnes, wird also geschehen und werden bey einem solchen Menschen Wohnung machen, wird dann ihr Gott und Vater seyn und er wird sein Sohn (oder Tochter) seyn, und wird solche nach seinem Willen leiten. Für solche wird dann die Gerechtigkeit Christi gelten, indem der Glaube an seine Genugthuung womit Er die beleidigten Gerechtigkeit des ewigen Vaters ein Genüge gethan hat zur Versöhnung womit gleichsam Gott durch das theure Verdienst Christi uns mit sich selbst nach seiner Erbarmenden Liebe versöhnt hat. Der Welt-Gebäude ist einmal ein sehr grosses Haus, und durch dessen weisen Baumeister (Gott) in viele Gemächer eingetheilt, und euch ist Europa als Wohnort angewiesen, von Alters her, und uns ist Amerika zugetheilt um darin zu wirken. Obwohl wir wohl durch den mächtigen Ozean getrennt sind, so bleibt dennoch wahr was der Apostel sagt dass die Sünde zu allen hindurch gedungen sey welche ist das abscheuliche Schuld-Übel wo uns unflätig in den Augen-Gottes macht, doch hat Gott durch seine unbegreifliche Liebe womit er uns geliebet hat einen Weg der Mittel gegeben auf welchem, oder wodurch wir ihm wieder gefallen mögen wenn wir selbiges nicht verachten oder durch Unglauben von uns stossen wovon oben schon gesagt. Liebe Brüder, ich achte es nöthig und sehr erbaulich dass wenn wir einander erinnern würden durch Briefe wie gleichsam die Apostel gethan haben, zur gegenseitigen Stärkung im Band der Bruderliebe so wie auch in Bekräftigung unsers allertheuersten Glaubens, welches noth thut sintemal sich der Tag der allgemeinen Vergeltung immer mehr naht.

Es kann meines erachtens nicht anders, als euch angenehm seyn von uns zu hören, gerade so wie auch uns, von euch zu hören, deswegen will ich es wagen euch etwas Nachricht ertheilen wie es einigermassen bey uns steht und geht. Leid hats mir schon oft gethan dass wir so wenig von euch wissen oder auch, Ihr von uns und alle ordinären Mittel stehen uns ja doch zu Gebot wenn wir sie nur ergreifen und benutzen. Einmal da ist Papier, Feder, und Tinten, so wie auch wieder die schöne Kunst nemlich Schreiben und dann wieder das Postwesen zu Wasser und zu Land, so dass wir unsere Gedanken einander mittheilen können oder gleichsam wie Nachbarn miteinander reden können. Jetzt will ich dann mit der grössten Gewissenhaftig-

keit euch etwas von uns erzählen, doch ich schrecke beynah zurück wenn ich überlege wie es noch bey uns ist gegen was es seyn sollte aber wir sind jetzt mehr am ordnen als je zuvor vielleicht gethan wurde in diesem Land.

1stens. Will ich suchen einige Bemerkungen zu machen so viel ich aus der Mennonitischen Sache schliessen kann von ihrem Ursprung in Amerika. Zuerst als die Väter von Europa hieher gelangten, fanden sie ein Land, bewohnt von Wilden (Indianern) welche die Europäer und andere als Feinde ansahen, und deswegen sie vielfältig mit ihrem Tomehaak (Streitaxt) und Scalp-Messer verfolgten, plünderten und umbrachten. Hieraus lässt sich schon schliessen dass die ersten Ansiedler unsers Volks sich nicht ordnen haben können wie sie (ganz natürlich) gewünscht hätten. Aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach haben sie sich geordnet so gut dass es sich unter ihrem damaligen dürftigen und vielangefochtenen Verhältnissen thun lies, doch aber in der grössten Unvollkommenheit. Als ihre Nachkommen die Sache unserer Gemeinschaft fortführen sollten, und wie es natürlich war dass Gelehrsamkeit unter ihren Umständen schon zu einem ziemlichen Grade versunken war, weil Schulen und Lehranstalten zur damaligen Zeit und Verhältnissen noch nicht gehörig eingerichtet werden konten um ihrer Dürftigkeit wegen, so beriefen die Jüngere sich schon viel auf die Wege ihrer Väter und hatten aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach nicht die Verbesserung ihres Gemeinwesens im Augenmerk wie es hätte seyn sollen, und endlich blieben viele unsers Volks zu viel an Scheindingen hängen wie schon an den Galatern und andere in früher Zeit des Christenthums sich zeigte.

Später, als Gelehrsamkeit wieder mehr zum Vorschein kam, und von zeit zu zeit Männer an den Dienst kamen mit mehr Gelehrsamkeit, welche suchten unsere Sache wieder zu verbessern, so hatten solche allezeit haftig mit der Unwissenheit zu kämpfen, und nicht selten sich in Trennungen endeten. Hieraus lässt sich also schliessen dass die Bekenner von Mennos Lehre sich in viele Klassen abtheilen. Viele Abkömmlinge unsers Volks gingen zu andere Religions-Benennungen über, andere stehen so ohne sich zu irgend etwas zu bekennen, leben und sterben also, und diejenigen welche dann wirklich zu unserer Glaubens-Verfassung sich zählen lassen, haben dennoch viele ihre ganz eigene Meynung von Lehre und Ordnung unserer Gemeinschaft. Es thut mir wahrhaftig leid ein solch Bekenntniss von unserm Volk in Amerika nämlich dass Mennonittische, abzulegen. Allein erlaubt mir euch zu erzählen auf *was* die Masse unserer Prediger zum Theil blickt um den wahren Mennoniten zu erkennen, das ist der "Rock." Wenn der das rechte Muster hat, dann ist nach vielen ihrer Meynung nach, alles recht. Leider haben aber viele es zu viel gemacht. Ezechiel 44, 6. Dass derer Herzen offenbar worden sind, welche mit Lug und Trug angefüllt sind und bald so zu sagen aller Ungerechtigkeit, dass bey vielen redlichen Gemüther gar nicht mehr nach dem Muster der Kleider gesehen wird, es sey dann übertrieben. Ihr fragt vielleicht warum dass dann solches alles geduldet wird so lasst mich antworten, dass eine grosse Zahl der Dienerschaft selbst in eine Tiefe Stufe der Unwissenheit versunken sind und deswegen manche Übel bey denselben Vorherstand geworden sind, mit einem Wort, ihr könnt hieraus hinlänglich schliessen dass die Mennonittische Gemeinschaft gar nicht in Amerika ist was sie seyn sollte und in einer völligen Zersplitterung da

steht. Es ist wahr, es sind noch einige Gemeinden hin und wieder allwo die Sache noch etwas besser gehandhabt wird, welches aber nur von der Fähigkeit ihrer einzelnen Diener abhängt. Wann ich alle Einzelheiten euch erzählte würde ich das tiefste Gefühl des Mitleids bey euch erwecken. Daher will ich für diesmal nicht mehr von der allgemeinen Verdorbenheit erzählen sondern will euch jetzt von unserer *Reformation* erzählen.

Man kann oft nicht begreifen wie wundervoll Gott oft eine Sache leitet um endlich mit derselben hervor zu brechen. Es gibt oft Sachen welche, wenn sie zuerst erscheinen, ganz verkehrt zu seyn scheinen und endlich siehet der denkende Mensch ganz klar was Gott damit will, und was Gott absolut will, kann auch niemand hindern. Die Reinheit der Lehre muss doch immer wieder hervor brechen. Sie kann eine Weile verdunkelt werden, aber nie gedämpft und unterdrückt, sonst wäre die reine Lehre des Evangeliums schon lang verdrängt und vernichtet. "Gott kann schaffen was er will" ihm zu lob.

Ich Armer, wurde nach der alten Gewohnheit durch Loos erwählt in meinem 34ten Jahr. Das Loos wurde und wird noch zum Theil so gehandhabt nemlich. Wenn ein Diener Nöthig ist in einer Gemeinde dann werden gestimmt. Der eine stimmt diesen, der andere jenen, nämlich Brüder in der Gemeinde, und so werden manchmal viele gestimmt oder angegeben. Als ich gewählt wurde waren 15 im Loos. Manchmal sind mehr manchmal weniger. Dann wird das Loos in ein Buch gethan und aber in die andere Bücher wird natürlicherweis keins gethan. Dann nimmt ein jeder der gestimmten ein Buch. Wen es dann trifft dem wird dann der Dienst anbefohlen und wann er noch so unfähig ist. Siehe 2 Tim. Cap. 2, v. 2. Ich suchte dann mein Amt redlich auszurichten, strafte ohne Ansehen der Person die Ungerechtigkeit nach meiner besten Gabe, aber auch bald, (obgleich ich grossen Beyfall hatte im Anfang) zeigte sich der Antichrist in der schandlichsten Gestalt um mich wieder aus dem Weg zu Räumen. Um dieses zu bezwecken nämlich mich aus dem Weg zu räumen, lasst mich erzählen, dass: als ich ein Glied in der Men. Gemeinde wurde, einen "Rock" trug so wie es ganz im allgemeinen bey unserm Volk im Gebrauch war. Aber derselbe war nicht grade wie die Vorgesetzten Röck trugen. Bald wurde mir angezeigt dass wenn ich mir nicht so oder so ein Rock verschaffen würde, dann würde es zur Folge haben dass ich abgesetzt würde. Das Muster von meinem Rock war derselbe wie ich denselben von Kindheit an getragen, oder von Jugend auf getragen hatte. Ich bat um Gedult und sagte ich wollte mir einen andern Rock verschaffen nämlich ein ander Muster sobald ich es erkennen konnte als meine Pflicht; aber ehe ich es erkennen konnte wurde bey dem Consilio beschlossen dass ich und noch andere meiner Mitdiener kein rathgebendes Recht mehr hätten bis wir uns Röck von einem andern Muster verschaffen würden; also ein Rockgesetz wurde bey uns gemacht, und sobald das gethan war legte ich mich feyerlich dagegen auf und erklärte als Menschen-gebot, und streitend gegen die Lehre des Evangeliums so wie auch der Apostel. Siehe Evan. Matth. 15, Röm. 16, vers 17, Col. 3. Hieraus könnt ihr schon denken dass es mehr oder weniger Unruhe gegeben hat. Dann wurde (dieweil das erste Gesetz nicht allgemein anerkannt wurde nämlich vom Volk) eine zweyte Verordnung vestgestellt nämlich: dass alle Glieder der Gem.

suspendirt wären vom Abendmahl wenn sie nicht mir den Rücken kehren wollten, nicht mir allein sondern allen im Dienst welche meines Sinnes wären. Die Folgen von dieser Verordnung könnt ihr euch leicht denken ohne dass ich sie euch beschreibe, doch so viel dass dieses eine etwaige Trennung herbey rief.

Wir haben uns jetzt gehörig geordnet, indem wir eine veste und geschriebene Regel und Ordnung wie unsere Gemeinschaft geregelt werden soll. Die Mennoniten hatten in diesem Land nie eine geschriebene Regel wie die Gem. gehandhabt werden sollte. Alles wird jetzt aufgeschrieben was von dem Consilio oder Prediger Zusammenkunft beschlossen wird; alles dieses wurde vor dieser Zeit ermangelt und gab stets Anlass zu Missverständnissen und Unruhen, und hat immer nur zusammengebrochen und nicht erbaut wie ihr vielleicht denken könnt. Aber merket: nur wir haben die Sache jetzt so geordnet. Wir haben unsere eigene Zusammenkunft bestehend aus 12 Prediger mit ihren Almosenpfleger. Die Verbesserung wirkt wie ein Lauffeuer in einem dünnen Wald.

Jetzt will ich euch erzählen wie es früher gethan wurde wenn Glieder in die Gemeinde aufgenommen worden sind. Wenn jemand Anspruch machte um Glied zu werden, dann wurde es in der Gemeinde bekannt gemacht und gesagt. Wenn noch mehrere wären dann sollten sie sich melden. Dann sind solche ein oder zwey mal zusammen gekommen. Wurden dann ermahnt. Dann wurden sie bedient mit der Taufe, aber man hat sie, nämlich die Tauflinge, nicht untersucht ob sie auch richtige Begriffe hätten von der Heils-Ordnung. Darnach hat man nicht gefragt. So war es, so weit mir bekannt war. Aber unter der jetzigen Verbesserung haben wir Kinderlehre eingeführt für Gross und Klein und wenn selbige in den Taufunterricht gehen, wird noch einmal mit ihnen durchgegangen alles was hauptsächlich mit Busse und Glauben in Verbindung steht. Dann unsere jetzige vestgestellte Ordnung fordert, dass keine zu Glieder aufgenommen werden sollen, es sey dann dass man Ursach zu glauben habe, dass solche auch aufrichtig gesonnen sind die Gemeinde zu zieren mit einem Tugend-samen Leben und Wandel. Wir haben jetzt ein klein Fragenbuch oder Katechismus, zuerst herausgegeben worden zu Elbing in Preussen im Jahr 1783 dann wieder in Hessen und Waldeckischen in 1797, dann wieder in Ober Canada in 1824. Von dort bekam ich ein Exemplar und lies es drucken in 1844. Jetzt liesen wir denselben wieder drucken in Skippach, Montgomery County, Pennsylvanien, allwo wir jetzt unsere jetztangenommene Ordnung beygefügt haben als Lehrbuch zum Glaubens-Unterricht für unsere Jugend. Vielleicht kann ich euch einmal ein Exemplar schicken wenn wir einmal einander näher bekannt werden. Unsere Predigerwahl haben wir auf diese Weise eingerichtet; nämlich, entweder durch eine Wahl in der Gemeinde, oder im Loos von zwey der fähigsten Personen, oder auch unmittelbar durch innere Antrieb. Wir haben schon einige von den geschicktesten Redner bekommen (Gott sey Dank) wo es früher, ich denk ich darf sagen aus 5 mal, 4 mal fehlten. O, meine liebe Brüder, mein Herz ist getrost wenn ich manchmal über die frohen Aussichten nachdenke. Ich hoffe die Zeit ist nicht mehr fern dass wir und ihr uns baldigst von Angesicht zu Angesicht begrüßen mögen durch bessere Einrichtungen und

einstweilig Besuche. Keinn grössere Freude könnte mir zu Theil werden als diese: wenn ich einmal Europa sehen könnte, und mich mit euch über das Heil so vieler unsterblichen Seelen zu berathen. Wer weis was noch geschehen kann.

Ihr werdet kaum wissen was ihr mit diesem Brief machen sollt, weil derselbe vermuthlich ganz unverhofft zu euch kommt. Ich gebe aber euch zum Schluss abermal die Versicherung meiner Redlichkeit, obgleich wir noch so ganz fremd, und einander so ganz unbekannt sind. Ich habe zwey Briefe gelesen von Bruder "Von der Smissen", ich glaube von Dännemark, welche an Bruder Benjamin Eby von Ober Canada geschrieben waren. Freylich ich habe jene Briefe nicht im Original gelesen. Sie waren so vortrefflichen Inhalts dass Bruder Eby selbe im Druck erschienen lies, welches mir sie zu Hand brachte. Dieses ist jetzt schon ohngefähr 4 Jahre und während jener Zeit konte ich nicht ruhig fühlen. Immer war der Drang in mir rege, ich sollte doch mal an die liebe Brüder in Europa schreiben. Ich erkundigte mich wo etwa Gemeinden in Europa wären. Dann bekam ich Nachricht von mehreren Gemeinden sammt deren Nahmen worunter sie genannt werden, so wie auch die Nahmen ihrer Diener oder Prediger. Dann meine Absicht ist noch mehr zu schreiben nämlich nachdem ich wieder Antwort von euch bekommen habe, was ich mit dem innersten Gefühl meiner Seele wünsche. Schreibt mir von den Religions-Verhältnissen überhaupt aber besonders diese, unserer Mennonitten Gemeinschaft. Wie grossen Gemeinden es hat? Wo sie sind? Zu welchen Königreich. So dass ich Briefe richtig an sie adressieren kann? Schreibt ebenfalls von den Staats-Angelegenheiten, dann wir hören oft von Unruhen bey euch in der politischen Staats-Welt, so dass wir schon oft geglaubt haben dass schwere Revolutionen über Europa schwebten. Schreibt mir von eurer Ordnung in eurer Gemeinde, dass ist, wie ihr Diener wählt, vom Muster der Kleider, nämlich: ob unsere Glieder in der Gemeinschaft an besondere Muster gebunden sind, von der Kinderlehre, ob ihr sie habt oder nicht, dann unsere Gegener hier haben sich schon so ausgedrückt: dass sie ihre Kinder lieber sehen wollen wenn sie fischen gehen wollen oder ins Wirts-Haus auf den Sabbath als in der Kinderlehre. Diejenige aus unserer Gemeinschaft welche so viel am Aussern haben erklären sich als Erzfeinde gegen jede Verbesserung wodurch der Sünder erweckt werden möge, dass thut uns sehr Leid und wünschen daher von euch zu hören von eurer Ordnung und Gebräuchen, u.s.w. wie oben gesagt.

Diesen Brief könnt ihr zu lesen geben wenn ihr wollt. Es ist nicht meine Absicht oder Wunsch dass dieser Brief in den Gemeinden bey euch vorgelesen werden soll. Doch könnt ihr thun wie ihr am besten denkt. Ich will euch ein wenig sagen wie unsere Kinderlehre gehalten wird. Es gehen erwachsene so wie auch Kleine Kinder, lauter solche welche lesen können. Wir haben an den mehrsten Plätzen alle zwey Wochen Versammlung. Die Kinderlehre ist nur durch die Sommers-Zeit allemal nachmittags wenn vormittags Gottes-Dienst war. Wenn die Kinder zusammen gekommen sind (es sind in etlichen Gemeinden 60-70 und noch mehr Kinder im Unterricht) dann werden sie im Gesang geübt eine halbe Stunde oder drey viertel. Dann wird ein Gebät von einem Prediger verrichtet. Dann sagen

die Kinder was sie auswendig gelernt haben durch die vergangenen zwey Wochen. Sie sind in Klassen eingetheilt. Viele kleine Kinder haben schon den ganzen Katechismus im Gedächtniss, andere lernen wieder aus der Bibel so dass sie dieselbe bekannt werden. Andere Bücher werden keine gebraucht zur Kinderlehre als nur die Bibel und das kleine Fragenbuch. Es nehmen ältere Glieder der Gemeinde theil, dann dass ganze werk wäre zu schwer fuer den Prediger allein, weil der Prediger allemal am Schluss noch eine Erklärung geben muss über das was sie gelernt haben, dann werden noch einige Lieder gesungen, und ein Schluss-Gebät gethan, dann ist die Kinderlehre aus. Wir haben schon wahr genommen dass die Sache reichlich gesegnet ist.

Ich weis kaum wo ich enden soll mit meiner Feder. Doch ich will schliessen mit dem Wunsch dass der Allmächtige und Allwissende Gott, welcher alle unsere Gedanken von ferne weis seinen Segen auf diese Paar. Zeilen legen möge, dass dieselben an ihrem Bestimmungs Ort ankommen mögen und solche Brüder finden welche es sich angelegen seyn lassen wollen uns mit einer Antwort zu begünstigen.

Zum Schluss Ebräer 13, v. 18. Betet für uns. Unser Trost ist der dass wir ein gut Gewissen haben und fleissigen uns guten Wandel zu führen bey allem. — Vielleicht komm ich einmal —. 20 Gott aber des Friedens der von den Toden aufgeföhret den grossen Hirten der Schaafe durch das Blut des ewigen Testaments, unsere Herrn Jesum, der mach euch (und uns) fertig in allem guten Werke zu thun seinen Willen, und schaffe in euch (und uns) was vor ihm gefällig ist durch Jesum Christum; welchem sey Ehre von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit Amen.

Geschrieben in Nieder Milford Taunship Bucks County Staat Pennsylvanien von einem euch unbekannten aber dennoch aufrichtigen Freund und Bruder in Christo.

Johann H. Oberholtzer

Verzeihet die Schreibfehler.

Wann ihr schreibt dann macht die Aufschrift auf dem Brief

Milford Township Bucks County State of Pennsylvania
Quakertown (Postoffice, Postamt)

X

FAREWELL MESSAGE OF PREACHER JOHN GEIL (1778-1866) TO HIS LEXINGTON CONGREGATION¹

Beloved in Jesus our Lord: Since I am interested in the welfare of the church, and ardently wish that it may grow and increase in every Christian virtue, and be found in the exercise of good works, not only during my lifetime, but also after my departure, I heartily desire that she may be a church ever glorious, and continue in a state of prosperity. Not knowing but that I may be suddenly taken away by death, and wishing to spend the last days, or the evening of my life so as to benefit others, I am constrained through love to write this address, especially to the church in the service of which I have labored, according to the ability which God has given me, for nearly forty-two years.

It may well be imagined that I have, in this time, had many experiences, both of pleasure and of pain. I have passed many sad and gloomy hours, and many sleepless nights; but I have also had my hours of gladness. I have coveted no man's gold, silver, apparel, or goods. "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shown you that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." I have labored in your service freely with the gift that has been bestowed on me; and now having devoted my best powers and much of my time to the church, I must soon depart from this life, and give account of my stewardship — God be merciful to me. What I have spoken to you, I acknowledge to be the truth according to the holy Scriptures; but that I have not confirmed and graced this testimony by so holy a manner of life, as I indeed may wish to have done, — this humbles me before my God.

Beloved in the Lord! I shall part from you with the earnest desire and prayer, that the Lord may bestow on you His rich blessing, that you may grow in grace and in holiness of life. Above all things it is my wish, and I entreat you, that you strive to maintain love, peace, and unity among yourselves. Love is the badge of the disciples of Jesus; as He himself says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." If you have not love one to another, you are not the disciples of Jesus, but you must follow after peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Earnestly endeavor to maintain love and unity, and you shall be strong and stand firm. Let love run through all your dealings with each other. Be not credulous. If you hear evil reports of your brethren and

¹ An English translation by John F. Funk of a German broadside. This English translation was published in the *Herald of Truth*, September, 1865, and reprinted in the *Biographical Sketch of Pre. John Geil*, by John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana, 1897, pp. 27-36.

sisters, or anything which may injure their honor or reputation, believe, hope, and wish the best concerning them, rather than the worst: this is the disposition of love. Ever be mindful of the words of Peter, "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins." Bear with each other in patience and forgive one another, even as God has forgiven you in Christ. If you would prosper, you must have love one to another, and especially should there be love between the church and her ministers, otherwise you cannot increase in godliness and holiness of life; and without love you cannot be built up by the teaching of your ministers. "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. And be at peace among yourselves." "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor; especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."

But ministers should not seek honor: but they should do their work out of love to the church, and to their Lord and Master Jesus, who out of love to our race has given His life to our service. They should do their work without designing to obtain honor or gain thereby; "not as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock:" "for they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Jesus Christ." The work of the ministry is indeed a difficult one; but there are also promises of great and rich rewards given to those who have been faithful and have honestly discharged their office and conscientiously fulfilled their duties. "They that be wise," says the prophet Daniel, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." But they are exposed to many dangers; for this is an evil world, in which we are exposed to many temptations and all kinds of danger.

It is therefore very highly necessary to watch and pray, because we may so easily be led away from the "one thing needful" and be allured into ways of error, unless we strive to walk carefully and prudently. The churches should therefore pray diligently for their ministers, that the Lord may give them grace, and clothe them with power from on high, and bestow on them the needful gifts, that they may be instruments in winning souls to their Lord. It is my ardent, longing wish and prayer, that the Lord may so direct, that we who have acknowledged each other as brethren and sisters here in the Church militant, may also be acknowledged and received as brethren and sisters in the Church triumphant in heaven above, where we shall enjoy eternal happiness and bliss, and receive an inheritance "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," a possession which "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

God grant that we may have, and steadfastly maintain this hope, so that we as true children of God may eventually be made partakers of the rich blessings of the house of God in the heavenly mansions; and this confidence we may have, if we have become the children of God through Jesus Christ; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." There we shall be free from all pain, suffering, and distress, and believers expect to meet each other again in the heavenly mansions. This

has been the desire and longing of believers in all ages; as for example, the patriarch Jacob awaited his salvation and said, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" David the king and prophet, chose rather to be a door-keeper in the house of his God, than to dwell in these tents of wickedness. Job waited for the time when his change should come, and had a strong hope and confidence in his Redeemer. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." Paul and his fellow believers earnestly desired to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven. Oh, that we may all be filled with such an earnest desire for the heavenly possessions and mansions, that we may continually strive, according to the admonition of Paul, after that which is above, and not after that which is on the earth. We should often think of the words of Jesus, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It should continually be our own greatest effort and desire to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and with Mary to choose the good part which shall never be taken from us. Therefore, dear brethren, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Dear brethren and sisters, if I should have ever injured, or grieved, or in any way wronged you, I ask pardon, and pray God that He may forgive me all my sins for Jesus Christ's sake. And all them that have despised, reproached or in any way grieved or wronged me, I will forgive with all my heart; and I pray God that He may not on my account, lay such things to their charge, and I wish to them rest to their souls in the kingdom of God. And to each and every one that has bestowed on me the least benefit or given me proof of his love and friendship, I feel heartily thankful; and if I cannot reward them for it, it is my ardent wish and prayer that the good God may in my stead richly reward them for it.

Beloved in the Lord, we have come upon critical times, in which many sects and denominations have already arisen among the professors of Christianity, and many more may yet arise. We hear everywhere the cry, "Lo, here is Christ, or there He is." Here prudence, watchfulness and caution are indeed necessary; for we are in danger of being turned from ourselves, to look abroad and see the kingdom of God without ourselves, while it is to be established within us, as Jesus on a certain occasion said: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say Lo here! or Lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you." It is therefore to our interest to look into our hearts and seek Jesus there and not out of ourselves; and each one holding constant communion with Jesus there, should build on Him his faith. This is the hope of our blessedness, to build on Jesus, the Rock of our salvation; and this you will do if you hear His words, and believe and do them. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will like him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock."

The Lord grant that we, as true children of God may eventually meet each other again in the heavenly mansions, where we shall rest from our works; and enjoy the fruits of our labors. If we have sowed to the Spirit, we shall there reap without ceasing; though we sow with tears we shall reap with joy, as we read in the 126th Psalm: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing the precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Ach Gott, durch deine Liebeshaende
 Mach' du mich jetzo noch bereit,
 Dasz ich an meinen letzten Ende
 In deinem Heil getrost abscheid.
 Dein Will' sei mir in Ewigkeit,
 Ein Centrum der Zufriedenheit.

Hiermit will ich nun Abschied nehmen
 Von Denen, die mich hier gekannt,
 Vorerst von Denen, die sich graemen,
 In ihrem armen Sorgenstand.
 Fuercht't Gott und betet Tag und Nacht,
 Zu ihm vertraut, nun gute Nacht.

Nun gute Nacht, du liebe Jugend,
 Gott segne und behuete Euch,
 Er ziere Euch mit Zucht und Tugend,
Und bringe Euch zu seinem Reich.
 Gut' Nacht euch Allen insgemein
 Jungen und Alten, Grosz und Klein.

From your loving and devoted brother and minister,
 John Geil.
 New Britain, Bucks County, Pa.—Nov. 30, 1852.

XI

RULES AND DISCIPLINE OF THE FRANCONIA CONFERENCE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Revised¹ July, 1933

The first Conference of the Mennonite Church in America was held in the year 1727,² where they concluded to adopt the "Dort Articles of Faith" as their foundation and doctrine in America, which are today extant (or in existence).

They have been undersigned by the following ministers:³

SKIPPACK — Jacob Goetshall, Henry Kolb, Cleas Jansen, Michael Ziegler.⁴

GERMANTOWN — John Garges, John Conerades, Claes Rittinghausen.

CONESTOGA — Hans Burgholtzer, Christian Herr, Benedict Hirsche, Martin Bear, Johnnes Bowman.

GREAT SWAMP — Velte Clemmer.

HEREFORD — Daniel Longenecker, Jacob Beghtly.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." — I Cor. 3:11.

I. CONFERENCE MEETING

1. For the cause of Christ and His Kingdom the Bishops of this Conference District shall on each Wednesday afternoon preceding Conference meet to consider the needs and desires of the several congregations, so that when difficulties arise they may have the opportunity to fully consider the questions and hold counsel before the regular session of Conference.⁵

2. Such as desire counsel shall present the same in a written and definite statement, or appear personally before the Bishops.⁶

3. Questions may be asked while Conference is in session, but if such questions are of great importance they will be held over until next Conference.⁷

¹ By the bishops and the conference secretary. For a number of rules the session when they were passed is indicated by footnotes. A number are very old and antedate the secretary's records, others are abridgments or compilations of several rules.

² More likely 1725, see *Hymnody and Literature*, pp. 316 ff.

³ For the original spelling see *Hymnody and Literature*, p. 318.

⁴ Martin Kolb's name has been omitted by mistake.

⁵ October 3, 1912 (This and the following dates represent the date of the session at which the rule was adopted).

⁶ October 3, 1912.

⁷ October 3, 1912.

4. When the Bishops agree upon a matter and bring it before Conference, and the matter is not understood by any member of Conference, he is privileged to make inquiry but not gainsay the matter in question.⁸

5. Nothing new shall enter into the Church unless it be confirmed by two-thirds vote of Conference.⁹

6. In counting the vote of Conference those Brethren that remain neutral are not counted either for or against.¹⁰

II. VARIOUS RULES

1. When discord arises in a Bishoprick, a Bishop, Minister or Deacon of another district is not to take up the matter until called by the Bishop in whose district the matter arose.¹¹

2. When the teachings of the Bishop are not Gospel and not in accord with the nonresistant doctrine, so that the Church is led astray the members are privileged to inquire of the other Bishops or the Conference.¹²

3. When the Minister or Deacon has any fault with the Bishop, he shall act according to Matt. 18, and the Ministry in general shall seek the peace of one another in this spirit.¹³

4. When in case of necessity a Minister baptizes an applicant in sickness the Minister shall as soon as possible make this known to the Bishop.¹⁴

5. When members are to be united in marriage, the Bishop is to officiate. If, however, another Minister is desired to perform the marriage ceremony, they shall first obtain the consent of the Bishop.¹⁵

6. No applicants will be received as members of the Church who have more than one husband or more than one wife living. Matt. 5:31, 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Rom. 7:2, 3; I Cor. 7:39, etc.¹⁶

7. In case of a vacancy by death or otherwise of a Minister or Deacon in any of the congregations, and said congregation would deem it necessary to ordain between Conference meetings, they are authorized to do so.¹⁷

8. The Bishops alone are to decide which of the visiting Ministers, whose faith is in question, are safe to preach at regular or special services in their respective districts. This is considered important because of the many new and strange doctrines afloat. (Rom. 16-17.)¹⁸

9. The members are admonished against forwardness, and be subject to those that have the rule over them according to Heb. 13:17.¹⁹

⁸ October 2, 1913.

⁹ October 3, 1912.

¹⁰ October 2, 1913.

¹¹ October 3, 1912.

¹² October 3, 1912; The conference minute book says ". . . to inquire of the other Bishops of the conference."

¹³ October 3, 1912.

¹⁴ October 3, 1912.

¹⁵ October 3, 1912.

¹⁶ October 1, 1925.

¹⁷ May 4, 1911.

¹⁸ May 5, 1915.

¹⁹ May 2, 1912.

10. Lay members of the Church are not to make appointments for visiting Ministers.²⁰

11. This conference strongly testifies against the habit of cigarette smoking. It urges that the congregations be admonished against this flagrant evil.²¹

12. When two members take communion together and afterward one brings complaint against the other of something that knowingly happened previous to communion, he is required to make confession together with the other member.

13. Members are admonished to act according to Matt. 18:15, in reference to their conversation, when a Brother or Sister is overtaken in a fault, and not carry it out into the world, or talk about it in a gossiping way.²²

14. That this conference feels the necessity of urging the leaders of the church to teach the new birth, separation from the world, nonresistance and other essentials relative to the welfare of the church, and not speculate on unfulfilled prophecy as the doctrine of the Millennium²³ and the doctrine of Eternal Security.²⁴

15. We as a conference, protest against the evils of the radio. Preachers should not remain silent, but condemn the worldly, foolish as well as the heretical doctrines on the air and often tuned in by so called Christian people.²⁵

III. ORDINATION

1. This conference believes in the method of ordination used by the early church according to Acts 1:15-26. Hence Bishops, Ministers and Deacons are chosen by voting and the casting of lots in case of two or more Brethren voted for.

2. The Bishops have the right to reject votes that are not in harmony with the Bible qualifications according to I Tim. 1:3-13; II Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:6-9.

3. In order to safeguard the lot in the ordination of church leaders, we recommend that at least one sermon be preached setting forth the Bible qualifications, prior to the taking of votes. Members should be encouraged to take an active part in nominating, and be fervently engaged in prayer.²⁶

IV. CHANGE OF LOCATION

1. That this conference will not receive any Bishop, Minister or Deacon from another conference district as an active member, except called by this conference and released by the conference of which he was a former member.²⁷

²⁰ October 7, 1915.

²¹ October 7, 1926.

²² May 2, 1912.

²³ May 5, 1921.

²⁴ May 5, 1932.

²⁵ October 1, 1931.

²⁶ May 4, 1933.

²⁷ October 6, 1921.

2. If any Brother leaves this Conference District and is ordained different from our Conference rules, his office is not recognized by this Conference District, except by consent of Conference.²⁸

V. SEVENTH DAY SABBATH

All members observing the "Seventh Day Sabbath" are not allowed to take communion until restitution be made.²⁹

VI. SUNDAY SCHOOLS

1. The Sunday School shall be under the supervision of Conference.³⁰

2. Such as have charge of Sunday Schools should exercise great care in selecting teachers that are good examples and teach the pure Gospel as understood by our Church.—II Tim. 4:3, 4.³¹

3. Sunday School meetings are granted to such congregations where the Church together with the Bishop and Ministry, are in accord with these meetings.³²

VII. SPECIAL MEETINGS

1. The Bible Instruction meetings³³ and continued meetings³⁴ are granted to such congregations where the Church, together with the Bishop and Ministry, are in accord with these meetings.

2. No Bible Instruction or any other meeting for the promotion of the evangelistic and mission cause shall be conducted by Brethren outside of our own or Lancaster Conference District, unless by the consent of the Bishops.³⁵

3. We encourage instruction in singing and the Bishops and Ministers should be consulted in selecting teachers to give the instruction, so that only faithful Brethren be chosen for this work.³⁶

VIII. FUNERALS

1. The different congregations are admonished against Sunday funerals, and if possible to hold them on other days.³⁷

2. Flowers and other decorations are to be omitted at all funerals held in our meetinghouses and members are not to clothe their dead in black.

3. It is deemed advisable on funeral occasions to select hymns that are familiar to the congregation so that the members can join in the song. We

²⁸ October 7, 1915.

²⁹ May 4, 1911.

³⁰ October 2, 1913.

³¹ May 4, 1911.

³² October 2, 1913.

³³ May 4, 1911.

³⁴ October 2, 1913.

³⁵ Similar to rule passed May 5, 1915.

³⁶ October 6, 1921.

³⁷ May 6, 1909.

encourage that the regular song books be used and the hymns announced to the congregation.³⁸

IX. APPAREL

1. The members are admonished to wear the plain clothing.
2. Members are required to submit themselves to the teachings of God's Word according to I Tim. 2:8, 9 and I Peter 3:3, 4, and further that Sisters shall not wear hats, fashionable clothing, or gold for adornment. They shall wear the plain devotional covering and use the strings for tying and not for ornament. Parents are to dress their children as becometh their faith, not follow the world in the cutting of their hair, wearing of jewelry, etc.
3. Conference agreed that members should be admonished relative to the dress question in public and privately (Acts 20:20), and after sufficient teaching and admonition, if they would not comply, would have to be rejected.—Titus 3:10.³⁹
4. The Brethren are not to get costly or stylish automobiles and not use them for pleasure, knowing that they are one of the greatest sources of evil. Good judgment should be used in running them lest we become a reproach to the world.—Luke 16:15.⁴⁰

X. CIVIL AFFAIRS

1. Members shall not take advantage of the Exemption Law, unless the debts are all paid.—Rom. 13:8.
2. Brethren are to be reminded of the seriousness of contracting debts of sums of money, large or small, without making attempts to pay either principal or interest and thus cause great offences to the church and the outside world. The Bible teaches us to owe no man anything but to love one another.—Rom. 13:8.⁴¹
3. Members shall not use the bankrupt law.
4. Members shall not sell a mortgage except all parties interested agree.
5. If a member makes an assignment and his debts cannot all be paid, he is to seek the peace of the debtors, if possible, in the presence of another Brother before he can take steps to come back into the Church.
6. If a member sues to recover a debt he is required to take another member with him and seek the peace of the debtor, if possible, before he can take steps to be reconciled to the Church.
7. Members are not to accept any public office.⁴² It is considered advisable to abstain from voting. Jno. 18:36; II Cor. 6:14; Phil. 3:20. R. V.⁴³

³⁸ May 5, 1932.

³⁹ October 4, 1928.

⁴⁰ October 4, 1917.

⁴¹ October 1, 1931.

⁴² May 7, 1908.

⁴³ October 4, 1917.

XI. SECRET SOCIETIES, ETC.

1. Members are not allowed to belong to secret societies, life insurance, labor unions, farmers' unions, attend fairs, excursions, picnics, surprise parties, moving picture shows, political meetings, parks, exhibitions, horse races, baby shows, and the like. Eph. 5:11, 12; II Cor. 6:14.

2. Our people are not to affiliate themselves with choral societies, so that they infringe on the plain principles of our church, nor to attend recitals in Music halls, Theaters, Academies and the like.⁴⁴

3. The members are not allowed to convey people to places of amusements where they themselves are forbidden to attend.⁴⁵

4. That members refrain from uniting and working with Breeders, Poultry, Milk or like associations.⁴⁶

5. No member is allowed to hold a license to sell spirituous liquors except for medicine, neither should members sign petitions for such licenses, neither should any go bond for such license.⁴⁷

We further caution our people to be careful and not engage in drinking but set an example of abstinence so that our testimony may be clear against it.⁴⁸

XII. CONCLUSION

1. This pamphlet does not contain all the decisions enacted by our conference. For further information consult the Word of God, our confession of faith, and the leaders of the Church.

2. The Conference rules should be read to every congregation at least once every year.⁴⁹

3. This Conference desires to continue in the nonresistant and simple faith of Christ. Matt. 5:39.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ May 1, 1924.

⁴⁵ May 7, 1914.

⁴⁶ May 6, 1920.

⁴⁷ May 4, 1933.

⁴⁸ May 4, 1933.

⁴⁹ October 3, 1918.

⁵⁰ Reaffirmed annually.

XII

THE DORTRECHT CONFESSION OF FAITH¹

ADOPTED AT DORTRECHT, HOLLAND, 1632

ARTICLE I

CONCERNING GOD AND THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS

Whereas it is declared, that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), and that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," therefore we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, together with all the pious, according to the Holy Scriptures, that there is one eternal, almighty, and incomprehensible God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and none more and none other, before whom no God existed, neither will exist after him. For from him, through him, and in him are all things. To him be blessing, praise, and honor, for ever and ever.

Gen. 17:1; Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 46:9; I John 5:7.

Gen. 17:1—And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Deut. 6:4—Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord:

Isa. 46:9—Remember the former things of old: for I am God and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.

I Jno. 5:7—For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

In this one God, who "worketh all in all," we believe. Him we confess as the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; who in six days created and prepared "heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." And we further believe, that this God still governs and preserves the same,

¹ During the latter part of the sixteenth century the Dutch and North German Mennonites divided into many factions over questions of doctrine and religious practice. There were Flemish, Old Flemish, several kinds of Friesians, Waterlanders and mediating Germans! Among the leaders a conviction was born that there could be a union on Scriptural grounds. In 1627 a confession was drawn up for that purpose at Amsterdam. In 1630 the "Olive Branch" Confession was made, also at Amsterdam, which united some Upper German and Friesian congregations. And on April 21, 1632 the Confession of Faith here printed was signed by fifty-one ministerial delegates at Dortrecht, or Dort, Holland.

The first draft of the Dort Confession was written by an Old Flemish bishop, Adrian Cornelis, at whose invitation the bishops and ministers assembled at Dort about the middle of April, 1632. The state church clergy protested against "this extraordinary gathering of Anabaptists from all provinces." The delegates concluded their deliberations by giving each other the right hand of fellowship and the kiss of peace and by the observance of the Lord's Supper.

This Confession was translated into German and printed at Rotterdam in 1658. In 1660 the Alsace ministers, assembled at Ohnenheim, adopted this Confession. The Mennonite congregations in the Palatinate and Germany also subsequent-

together with all his works, through his wisdom, his might, and the "word of his power." Gen. 5:1, 2; Acts 14:15; I Cor. 12:6; Heb. 1:3.

Gen. 5:1, 2—This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, Male and female created he them and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

Acts 14:15— . . . We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the seas, and all things that are therein.

I Cor. 12:6—And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Heb. 1:3—Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

When he had finished his works and, according to his good pleasure, had ordained and prepared each of them, so that they were right and good according to their nature, being and quality, he created the first man, Adam, the father of all of us, gave him a body formed "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," so that he "became a living soul," created by God "in his own image and likeness," in "righteousness and true holiness" unto eternal life. He also gave him a place above all other creatures and endowed him with many high and excellent gifts, put him into the garden of Eden, and gave him a commandment and an interdiction. Thereupon he took a rib from the said Adam, made a woman out of it, brought her to him, and gave her to him as a helpmate and housewife. Consequently he has caused, that from this first man, Adam, all men who "dwell on the face of the earth," have been begotten and have descended. Gen. 1: 27; 2:7, 15-17, 22; 5:1; Acts 17:26.

Gen. 1:27—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Gen. 2:7, 15-17, 22—And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

ly adopted the Dort statement. The Swiss Mennonites never subscribed to the Dort Articles of Faith. In the year 1725 the Pennsylvania Mennonites, many of whom were of Swiss and south German families, subscribed to the Dort Confession (in English) and this statement is now recognized as the standard Confession of Faith of the (American) Mennonite Church.

It will be noted that the statement is strongly Scriptural, often stated in Biblical phrases and does not deal with the speculative problems of theology. Points of religious practice on which there was no dispute are not mentioned, for example, the prayer veiling (I Corinthians 11:2-16). Article XVII was never strictly adhered to in America nor was it ever practiced by the Swiss Mennonites. And most of the Franconia Mennonites are of Swiss and south German stock. (Some of this data is based on the research of John Horsch.)

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat;

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Gen. 5:1—This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.

Acts 17:26—And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.

ARTICLE II

THE FALL OF MAN

We believe and confess, that, according to the purport of the Holy Scriptures, our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not long remain in the happy state in which they were created; but did, after being seduced by the deceit and "subtility" of the serpent, and envy of the devil, violate the high command of God, and became disobedient to their Creator; through which disobedience "sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" so that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," and thereby incurred the wrath of God and condemnation. For which reason our first parents were, by God, driven out of Paradise, to cultivate the earth, to maintain themselves thereon in sorrow, and to "eat their bread in the sweat of their face," until they "returned to the ground, from which they were taken." And that they did, therefore, through this one sin, so far apostatize, depart, and estrange themselves from God, that they could neither help themselves, nor be helped by any of their descendants, nor by angels, nor by any other creature in heaven or on earth, nor be redeemed, or reconciled to God; but would have had to be lost forever, had not God, who pitied his creatures, in mercy, interposed in their behalf and made provision for their restoration. Gen. 3:6, 23; Rom. 5:12-19; Psalm 47:8, 9; Rev. 5:3; John 3:16.

Gen. 3:6, 23—And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Rom. 5:12-19—Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift: for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Psa. 47 :8, 9—God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

Rev. 5:3—And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

John 3:16—For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

ARTICLE III

THE RESTORATION OF MAN THROUGH THE PROMISE OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

Regarding the restoration of our first parents and their descendants, we believe and confess: That God, notwithstanding their fall, transgression and sin, and although they had no power to help themselves, he was nevertheless not willing that they should be cast off entirely, or be eternally lost; but again called them unto him, comforted them, and showed them that there were yet means with him for their reconciliation; namely, the immaculate Lamb, the Son of God; who "was fore-ordained" to this purpose "before the foundation of the world," and who was promised to them and all their descendants, while they (our first parents) were yet in paradise, for their comfort, redemption, and salvation; yea, who was given to them thenceforward, through faith, as their own; after which all the pious patriarchs, to whom this promise was often renewed, longed and searched, beholding it through faith at a distance, and expecting its fulfillment—expecting that he (the Son of God), would, at his coming, again redeem and deliver the fallen race of man from their sins, their guilt, and unrighteous-

ness. John 1:29; 11:27; I Pet. 1:18, 19; Gen. 3:15; I Jno. 2:1, 2; 3:8; Gal. 4:4, 5.

Jno. 1:29—The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Jno. 11:27—She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

I Pet. 1:18, 19—Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Gen. 3:15—And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

I Jno. 2:1, 2—My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

I Jno. 3:8—He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Gal. 4:4, 5—But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

ARTICLE IV

THE ADVENT OF CHRIST INTO THIS WORLD, AND THE REASON OF HIS COMING

We believe and confess further: That “when the fullness of the time was come,” after which all the pious patriarchs so ardently longed, and which they so anxiously awaited—the previously promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior, proceeded from God, being sent by Him, and according to the prediction of the prophets and the testimony of the evangelists, came into the world, yea, into the flesh —, so that the word itself thus became flesh and man; and that he was conceived by the Virgin Mary (who was espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David), and that she bare him as her first-born son at Bethlehem, “wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.” John 4:25; 16:28; I Tim. 3:16; Matt. 1:21; John 1:14; Luke 2:7.

Jno. 4:25—The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jno. 16:28—I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

I Tim. 3:16—And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Matt. 1:21—And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Jno. 1:14—And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Luke 2:7—And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Further we believe and confess, that this is the same One, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;" who has "neither beginning of days, nor end of life." Of whom it is testified, that he is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." That this is also he—and none other—who was chosen, promised, and sent; who came into the world; and who is God's only, first, and proper Son; who was before John the Baptist, before Abraham, before the world; yea, who was David's Lord, and who was God of the "whole earth," "the first-born of every creature;" who was sent into the world, and himself delivered up the body prepared for him, as "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor;" yea, for the comfort, redemption, and salvation of all—of the human race. Micah 5:2; Heb. 7:3; Rev. 1:8; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Col. 1:15; Heb. 10:5.

Micah 5:2—But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Heb. 7:3—Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Rev. 1:8—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Jno. 3:16—For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.

Rom. 8:32—He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Col. 1:15—Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Heb. 10:5—Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

But how, or in what manner, this worthy body was prepared, or how the word became flesh, and he himself man, we content ourselves with the declaration which the worthy evangelists have given and left in their de-

scription thereof;² according to which we confess with all the saints, that he is the Son of the living God, in whom exist all our hope, comfort, redemption, and salvation, and which we are to seek in no one else. Luke 1:31-35; John 20:31.

Luke 1:31-35—And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

John 20:31—But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Further, we believe and confess by authority of scripture, that when he had ended his course, and “finished” the work for which he was sent into the world, he was, by the providence of God, delivered into the hands of the unrighteous; suffered under the judge, Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of the Majesty of God on high; from whence he will come again to judge the living and dead. Luke 23:1, 52, 53; 24:5, 6, 51.

Luke 23:1, 52, 53—And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Luke 24:5, 6, 51—And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Thus we believe the Son of God died—“tasted death for every man,” shed his precious blood, and thereby bruised the head of the serpent, de-

² A much disputed point among the Dutch Mennonites was the origin of Christ's flesh. “How could the sinless divine nature of Christ be incarnated in the flesh of sinful descendants of fallen Adam?”

stroyed the works of the devil, "blotted out the hand-writing," and purchased redemption for the whole human race; and thus he became the source of eternal salvation to all who from the time of Adam to the end of the world, shall have believed in him, and obeyed him. Gen. 3:15; I John 3:8; Col. 2:14; Rom. 5:18.

Gen. 3:15—And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

I Jno. 3:8—He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Col. 2:14—Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Rom. 5:18—Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

ARTICLE V

THE LAW OF CHRIST, WHICH IS THE HOLY GOSPEL, OR THE NEW TESTAMENT

We also believe and confess, that Christ, before his ascension, established and instituted his New Testament and left it to his followers, to be and remain an everlasting testament, which he confirmed and sealed with his own precious blood; and in which he has so highly commended to them, that neither men or angels may change it, neither take therefrom nor add thereto. Jer. 31:31; Heb. 9:15-17; Matt. 26:28; Gal. 1:8; I Tim. 6:3-5; Rev. 22:18, 19; Matt. 5:18; Luke 21:33.

Jer. 31:31—Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Heb. 9:15-17—And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Matt. 26:28—For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Gal. 1:8—But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

I Tim. 6:3-5—If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Rev. 22:18, 19—For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Matt. 5:18—For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Luke 21:33—Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

And that he has caused this Testament (in which the whole counsel and will of his heavenly Father, so far as these are necessary to the salvation of man, are comprehended), to be proclaimed, in his name, through his beloved apostles, messengers, and servants (whom he chose and sent into all the world for this purpose)—to all nations, people and tongues; these apostles preaching repentance and remission of sins; and that he, in said Testament, caused it to be declared, that all men without distinction, if they are obedient, through faith, follow, fulfill and live according to the precepts of the same, are his children and rightful heirs; having thus excluded none from the precious inheritance of eternal salvation, except the unbelieving and disobedient, the headstrong and unconverted; who despise such salvation; and thus by their own actions incur guilt by refusing the same, and “judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.” Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46, 47; Rom. 8:17; Acts 13:46.

Mk. 16:15—And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Luke 24:46, 47—And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Rom. 8:17—And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Acts 13:46—Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

ARTICLE VI

REPENTANCE AND AMENDMENT OF LIFE

We believe and confess, that, as the "imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," and consequently inclined to all unrighteousness, sin and wickedness, that, therefore, the first doctrine of the precious New Testament of the Son of God is, Repentance and amendment of life. Gen. 8:21; Mark 1:15.

Gen. 8:21—And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Mark 1:15—And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Therefore those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, must "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," amend their lives, believe the gospel, "depart from evil and do good," desist from wrong and cease from sinning, "put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man," which after God is created in "righteousness and true holiness." For neither *Baptism, Sacrament, nor church-fellowship*, nor any other external ceremony, can, without faith, the new birth, and a change or renewal of life, help, or qualify us, that we may please God, or receive any consolation or promise of salvation from him. Luke 3:8; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10.

Luke 3:8—Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Eph. 4:22-24—That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Col. 3:9, 10—Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

But on the contrary, we must go to God "with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith," and believe in Jesus Christ, as the scriptures speak and testify of him. Through which faith we obtain the pardon of our sins, become sanctified, justified, and children of God; yea, partakers of his mind, nature and image, as we are born again of God through his incorruptible seed from above. Heb. 10:21, 22; John 7:38; II Pet. 1:4.

Heb. 10:21, 22—And having a high priest over the house of God;

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Jno. 7:38—He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

II Pet. 1:4—Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

ARTICLE VII

HOLY BAPTISM

Regarding baptism, we confess that all penitent believers,³ who through faith, the new birth and renewal of the Holy Ghost, have become united with God, and whose names are recorded in heaven, must, on such scriptural confession of their faith, and renewal of life, according to the command and doctrine of Christ, and the example and custom of the apostles, be baptized with water in the ever adorable name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to the burying of their sins, and thus to become incorporated into the communion of the saints; whereupon they must learn to observe all things whatever the Son of God taught, left on record, and commanded his followers to do. Matt. 3:15; 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:33; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12.

Matt. 3:15—And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Matt. 28:19, 20—Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15, 16—And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 2:38—Then Peter said unto them: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:12—But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:38—And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Acts 9:18—And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.

³ Believers' baptism and a free (of state control) church, together with nonresistance are outstanding doctrines which the Mennonite Church has maintained for more than four centuries.

- Acts 10:47—Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?
- Acts 16:33—And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
- Rom. 6:3, 4—Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- Col. 2:12—Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

ARTICLE VIII

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

We believe in and confess a visible Church of God, consisting of those, who, as before remarked, have truly repented, and rightly believed; who are rightly baptized, united with God in heaven, and incorporated into the communion of the saints on earth. I Cor. 12:13.

I Cor. 12:13—For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

And these, we confess, are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation," who have the testimony that they are the "bride" of Christ; yea, that they are children and heirs of eternal life—a "habitation of God through the Spirit," built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which "Christ himself is the chief cornerstone"—the foundation on which his church is built. John 3:29; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19-21; Tit. 3:7; I Pet. 1:18, 19; 2:9.

Jno. 3:29—He that hath the bride is the bridegroom but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Matt. 16:18—And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Eph. 2:19-21—Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord:

Tit. 3:7—That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

I Pet. 1:18, 19—Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with the corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;

I Pet. 2:9—But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

This church of the living God, which he has purchased and redeemed through his own precious blood, and with which he will be—according to his own promise—for her comfort and protection, “always, even unto the end of the world;” yea, will dwell and walk with her, and preserve her, that no “winds” nor “floods,” yea, not even the “gates of hell shall prevail against her”—may be known by her evangelical faith, doctrine, love, and godly conversation; also by her pure walk and practice, and her observance of the true ordinances of Christ, which he has strictly enjoined on his followers. Matt. 7:25; 16:18; 28:20; II Cor. 6:16.

Matt. 7:25—And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Matt. 16:18—(See p. 446).

Matt. 28:20—Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

II Cor. 6:16—And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

ARTICLE IX

THE OFFICE OF TEACHERS AND MINISTERS—MALE AND FEMALE—IN THE CHURCH

Regarding the offices, and election of persons to the same, in the church, we believe and confess: That, as the church cannot exist and prosper, nor continue in its structure, without offices and regulations, that therefore the Lord Jesus has himself (as a father in his house), appointed and prescribed his offices and ordinances, and has given commandments concerning the same, as to how each one should walk therein, give heed to his own work and calling, and do it as it becomes him to do. Eph. 4:11, 12.

Eph. 4:11, 12—And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

For he himself, as the faithful and great Shepherd, and Bishop of our souls, was sent into the world, not to wound, to break, or destroy the souls

of men, but to heal them; to seek that which is lost, and to pull down the hedges and partition wall, so as to make out of *many one*; thus collecting out of Jews and heathen, yea, out of all nations, a church in his name; for which (so that no one might go astray or be lost) he laid down his own life, and thus procured for them salvation, made them free and redeemed them, to which blessing no one could help them, or be of service in obtaining it. I Pet. 2:25; Matt. 18:11; Eph. 2:13, 14; John 10:9, 11, 15.

I Pet. 2:25—For ye were as sheep going astray; but ye are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Matt. 18:11—For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

Eph. 2:13, 14—But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Jno. 10:9, 11, 15—I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And that he, besides this, left his church before his departure, provided with faithful ministers, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whom he had chosen by prayer and supplication through the Holy Spirit, so that they might govern the church, feed his flock, watch over, maintain, and care for the same: yea, do all things as he left them an example, taught them, and commanded them to do; and likewise to teach the church to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them. Eph. 4:11, 12; Luke 6:12, 13; 10:1; Matt. 28:20.

Eph. 4:11, 12—And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;

Luke 6:12, 13—And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

Luke 10:1—After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Matt. 28:20—Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Also that the apostles were afterwards, as faithful followers of Christ and leaders of the church, diligent in these matters, namely, in choosing through prayer and supplication to God, brethren who were to provide all the churches in the cities and circuits, with bishops, pastors, and leaders,

and to ordain to these offices such men as took "heed unto themselves and unto the doctrine," and also unto the flock; who were sound in the faith, pious in their life and conversation, and who had—as well within the church as "without"—a good reputation and a good report; so that they might be a light and example in all godliness and good works; might worthily administer the Lord's ordinances—baptism and sacrament—and that they (the brethren sent by the apostles) might also, at all places, where such were to be had, appoint faithful men as elders, who were able to teach others, confirm them in the name of the Lord "with the laying on of hands," and who (the elders) were to take care of all things of which the church stood in need; so that they, as faithful servants, might well "occupy" their Lord's money, gain thereby, and thus "save themselves and those who hear them."⁴ I Tim. 3:1; 4:14-16; Acts 1:23, 24; Tit. 1:5; Luke 19:13.

I Tim. 3:1—This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

I Tim. 4:14-16—Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Acts 1:23, 24—And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias,

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whither of these two thou hast chosen.

Tit. 1:5—For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Luke 19:13—And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

That they should also take good care (particularly each one of the charge over which he had the oversight), that all the circuits should be well provided with almoners, who should have the care and oversight of the poor, and who were to receive gifts and alms, and again faithfully to distribute them amongst the poor saints who were in need, and this in all honesty, as is becoming. Acts 6:3-6.

Acts 6:3-6—Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus,

⁴ No particular method of choosing ministers is here prescribed.

and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

Also that honorable old widows should be chosen as servants, who, besides the almoners, are to visit, comfort, and take care of the poor, the weak, afflicted, and the needy, as also to visit, comfort, and take care of widows and orphans; and further to assist in taking care of any matters in the church that properly come within their sphere, according to their best ability.⁵ I Tim. 5:9, 10; Rom. 16:1, 2.

I Tim. 5:9, 10—Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Rom. 16:1, 2—I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

And as it further regards the almoners, that they (particularly if they are fit persons, and chosen and ordained thereto by the church), may also in aid and relief of the bishops, exhort the church (being, as already remarked, chosen thereto), and thus assist in word and doctrine; so that each one may serve the other from love, with the gift which he has received from the Lord; so that through the common service and assistance of each member, according to his ability, the body of Christ may be edified, and the Lord's vineyard and church be preserved in its growth and structure. II Tim. 2:2.

II Tim. 2:2—And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

ARTICLE X

THE LORD'S SUPPER

We also believe in and observe the breaking of bread, or the Lord's Supper, as the Lord Jesus instituted the same (with bread and wine) before his sufferings, and also observed and ate it with the apostles, and also commanded it to be observed to his remembrance, as also the apostles subsequently taught and observed the same in the church, and commanded it to be observed by believers in commemoration of the death and sufferings of the Lord—the breaking of his worthy body and the shedding of his precious

⁵ No women are specially given the work of a deaconess in the Franconia Conference but in the Virginia Conference several women are appointed for this work.

blood—for the whole human race. So is the observance of this sacrament also to remind us of the benefit of the said death and sufferings of Christ; namely, the redemption and eternal salvation which he purchased thereby, and the great love thus shown to sinful man; whereby we are earnestly exhorted also to love one another—to love our neighbor—to forgive and absolve him—even as Christ has done unto us—and also to endeavor to maintain and keep alive the union and communion which we have with God, and amongst one another; which is thus shown and represented to us by the aforesaid breaking of bread. Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19, 20; Acts 2:42, 46; I Cor. 10:16; 11:23-26.

Matt. 26:26—And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Mark 14:22—And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Luke 22:19, 20—And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Acts 2:42, 46—And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

I Cor. 10:16—The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

I Cor. 11:23-26—For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

ARTICLE XI

THE WASHING OF THE SAINTS' FEET

We also confess a washing of the feet of the saints, as the Lord Jesus did not only institute and command the same, but did also himself wash the feet of the apostles, although he was their Lord and master; thereby giving an example that they also should wash one another's feet, and thus do to

one another as he did to them; which they also afterwards taught believers to observe, and all this is a sign of true humiliation; but yet more particularly as a sign to remind us of the true washing—the washing and purification of the soul in the blood of Christ.⁶ John 13:4-17; I Tim. 5:9, 10.

John 13:4-17—He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

I Tim. 5:9, 10—Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years, having been the wife of one man,

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

ARTICLE XII

MATRIMONY

We also confess that there is in the church of God an "honorable" state of matrimony between two believers of the different sexes, as God first instituted the same in paradise between Adam and Eve, and as the Lord Jesus

⁶ Not practiced by all the South German and Swiss Mennonites. It is generally observed by the (American) Mennonite Church.

reformed it by removing all abuses which had crept into it, and restoring it to its first order. Gen. 1:27; 2:18, 21-24.

Gen. 1:27—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Gen. 2:18, 21-24—And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

In this manner the apostle Paul also taught and permitted matrimony in the church, leaving it to each one's own choice to enter into matrimony with any person who would unite with him in such state, provided that it was done "in the Lord," according to the primitive order; the words "in the Lord," to be understood, according to our opinion, that just as the patriarchs had to marry amongst their own kindred or generation, so there is also no other liberty allowed to believers under the New Testament Dispensation, than to marry amongst the "chosen generation," or the spiritual kindred of Christ; that is, to such—and none others—as are already, previous to their marriage, united to the church in heart and soul, have received the same baptism, belong to the same church, are of the same faith and doctrine, and lead the same course of life, with themselves. I Cor. 7:39; 9:5; Gen. 24:4; 28:6, 7; Num. 36:6-9.

I Cor. 7:39—The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

I Cor. 9:5—Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Gen. 24:4—But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Gen. 28:6, 7—When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram;

Num. 36:6-9—This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe

to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

Such are then, as already remarked, united by God and the church according to the primitive order, and this is then called, "Marrying in the Lord." I Cor. 7:39. (See p. 453).

ARTICLE XIII

THE OFFICE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We also believe and confess, that God has instituted civil government, for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the pious; and also further, for the purpose of governing the world, countries and cities; and also to preserve its subjects in good order and under good regulations. Wherefore we are not permitted to despise, revile, or resist the same, but are to acknowledge it as a minister of God and be subject and obedient to it, in all things that do not militate against the law, will, and commandments of God; yea, "to be ready to every good work;" also faithfully to pay it custom, tax, and tribute; thus giving it what is its due; as Jesus Christ taught, did himself, and commanded his followers to do. That we are also to pray to the Lord earnestly for the government and its welfare, and in behalf of our country, so that we may live under its protection, maintain ourselves, and "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." And further, that the Lord would recompense them (our rulers), here and in eternity, for all the benefits, liberties, and favors which we enjoy under their laudable administration. Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1, 2; I Pet. 2:17; Matt. 17:27; 22:20, 21; I Tim. 2:1, 2.

Rom. 13:1-7—Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Titus 3:1, 2—Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

I Pet. 2:17—Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Matt. 17:27—Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Matt. 22:20, 21—And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

I Tim. 2:1, 2—I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

ARTICLE XIV

DEFENSE BY FORCE

Regarding revenge, whereby we resist our enemies with the sword, we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus has forbidden his disciples and followers all revenge and resistance, and has thereby commanded them not to "return evil for evil, nor railing for railing;" but to "put up the sword into the sheath," or, as the prophets foretold, "beat them into ploughshares."⁷ Matt. 5:39, 44; Rom. 12:14; I Pet. 3:9; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3.

Matt. 5:39, 44—But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Rom. 12:14—Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

I Pet. 3:9—Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

⁷ This nonresistance is not the modern pacifism but it is a stalwart acceptance of the ethic of the New Testament for the Christian.

Isa. 2:4—And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Micah 4:3—And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

From this we see, that, according to the example, life, and doctrine of Christ, we are not to do wrong, or cause offense or vexation to anyone; but to seek the welfare and salvation of all men; also, if necessity should require it, to flee, for the Lord's sake, from one city or country to another, and suffer the "spoiling of our goods," rather than give occasion of offense to anyone; and if we are struck on our "right cheek, rather to turn the other also," than revenge ourselves, or return the blow. Matt. 5:39; 10:23; Rom. 12:19.

Matt. 5:39—(See p. 455).

Matt. 10:23—But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Rom. 12:19—Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

And that we are, besides this, also to pray for our enemies, comfort and feed them, when they are hungry or thirsty, and thus by well-doing convince them and overcome the evil with good. Rom. 12:20, 21.

Rom. 12:20, 21—Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Finally, that we are to do good in all respects, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and according to the law of Christ, do nothing to others that we would not wish them to do unto us.

II Cor. 4:2; Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31.

II Cor. 4:2—But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Matt. 7:12—Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke 6:31—And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

ARTICLE XV

THE SWEARING OF OATHS

Regarding the swearing of oaths, we believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus has dissuaded his followers from and forbidden them the same; that is, that he commanded them to "swear not at all;" but that their "Yea" should be "yea," and their "Nay, nay." From which we understand that all oaths, high and low, are forbidden; and that instead of them we are to confirm all our promises and covenants, declarations and testimonies of all matters, merely with "Yea that is yea," and "Nay that is nay;" and that we are to perform and fulfill at all times, and in all things, to every one, every promise and obligation to which we thus affirm, as faithfully as if we had confirmed it by the most solemn oath. And if we thus do, we have the confidence that no one—not even government itself—will have just cause to require more of us. Matt. 5:34-37; James 5:12; II Cor. 1:17.

Matt. 5:34-37—But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne;

Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Jas. 5:12—But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

II Cor. 1:17—When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

ARTICLE XVI

EXCOMMUNICATION OR EXPULSION FROM THE CHURCH

We also believe in and acknowledge the ban, or excommunication, a separation or spiritual punishment by the church, for the amendment, and not for the destruction, of offenders; so that what is pure may be separated from that which is impure. That is, if a person, after having been enlightened, and received the knowledge of the truth, and has been received into the communion of the saints, does willfully, or out of presumption, sin against God, or commit some other "sin unto death," thereby falling into such unfruitful works of darkness, that he becomes separated from God, and is debarred from his kingdom—that such an one—when his works are become manifest, and sufficiently known to the church—cannot remain in the "congregation of the righteous;" but must, as an offensive member and open sinner, be excluded from the church, "rebuked before all," and "purged out as a leaven," and thus remain until his amendment, as an example and

warning to others, and also that the church may be kept pure from such "spots" and "blemishes;" so that not for the want of this, the name of the Lord be blasphemed, the church dishonored, and a stumbling-block thrown in the way of those "without," and finally, that the offender may not be condemned with the world, but that he may again be convinced of the error of his ways, and brought to repentance and amendment of life. Isaiah 59: 2; I Cor. 5:5, 6, 12; I Tim. 5:20; II Cor. 13:10.

Isa. 59:2—But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

I Cor. 5:5, 6, 12—To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

I Tim. 5:20—Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

II Cor. 13:10—Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Regarding the brotherly admonition, as also the instruction of the erring, we are to "give all diligence" to watch over them, and exhort them in all meekness to the amendment of their ways (James 5:19, 20); and in case any should remain obstinate and unconverted, to reprove them as the case may require. In short, the church must "put away from among herself him that is wicked," whether it be in doctrine or life.

Jer. 5:19, 20—Brethren, if any of ye do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

ARTICLE XVII

THE SHUNNING OF THOSE WHO ARE EXPELLED

As regards the withdrawing from, or the shunning of, those who are expelled, we believe and confess, that if any one, whether it be through a wicked life or perverse doctrine—is so far fallen as to be separated from God, and consequently rebuked by, and expelled from, the church, he must also, according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, be shunned and avoided by all the members of the church (particularly by those to whom his misdeeds are known), whether it be in eating or drinking, or other such like social matters. In short, that we are to have nothing to do with him; so that we may not become defiled by intercourse with him, and partakers of his sins; but that he may be made ashamed, be affected in his mind, convinced in his conscience, and thereby induced to amend his ways. I Cor. 5: 9-11; Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:14; Tit. 3:10, 11.

I Cor. 5:9-11—I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat.

Rom. 16:17—Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

II Thess. 3:14—And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Titus 3:10, 11—A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject;

Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

That nevertheless, as well in shunning as in reproving such offender, such moderation and Christian discretion be used, that such shunning and reproof may not be conducive to his ruin, but be serviceable to his amendment. For should he be in need, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or visited by some other affliction, we are in duty bound, according to the doctrine and practice of Christ and his apostles, to render him aid and assistance, as necessity may require; otherwise the shunning of him might be rather conducive to his ruin than to his amendment. I Thess. 5:14.

I Thess. 5:14—Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Therefore we must not treat such offenders as enemies, but exhort them as brethren, in order thereby to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; so that they may again become reconciled to God and the church, and be received and admitted into the same—thus exercising love towards them, as is becoming. II Thess. 3:15.

II Thess. 3:15—Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

ARTICLE XVIII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND THE LAST JUDGMENT

Regarding the resurrection of the dead, we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, that according to the scriptures—all men who shall have died or “fallen asleep,” will—through the incomprehensible power of God—at the day of judgment,⁸ be “raised up” and made alive; and

⁸ Both the early European and American Mennonites (until recent years) were generally free of any doctrine of a millennium. The Franconia Conference still stands solidly on the sensible, Scriptural position stated in Article XVIII.

that these, together with all those who then remain alive, and who shall be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," shall "appear before the judgment seat of Christ," where the good shall be separated from the evil, and where "every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;" and that the good or pious shall then further, as the blessed of their Father, be received by Christ into eternal life, where they shall receive that joy which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man." Yea, where they shall reign and triumph with Christ for ever and ever. Matt. 22:30-32; 25:31; Dan. 12:2; Job 19:25, 26; John 5:28, 29; I Cor. 15:51, 52; I Thess. 4:13.

Matt. 22:30-32—For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Matt. 25:31—When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

Dan. 12:2—And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Job 19:25, 26—For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

John 5:28, 29—Marvel not at this for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

I Cor. 15:51, 52—Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I Thess. 4:13—But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

And that, on the contrary, the wicked or impious, shall, as the accursed of God, be cast into "outer darkness;" yea, into eternal, hellish torments; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" and where—according to Holy Scripture—they can expect no comfort nor redemption throughout eternity. Isaiah 66:24; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:46; Rev. 14:10, 11.

Isa. 66:24—And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Matt. 25:46—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Mark 9:46—Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Rev. 14:10, 11—The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

May the Lord through his grace make us all fit and worthy, that no such calamity may befall any of us; but that we may be diligent, and so take heed to ourselves, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Amen.

Now these are, as before mentioned, the chief articles of our general Christian Faith, which we everywhere teach in our congregations and families, and according to which we profess to live; and which, according to our convictions, contain the only true Christian Faith, which the apostles in their time believed and taught; yea, which they testified to by their lives and confirmed by their deaths; in which we will also, according to our weakness, gladly abide, live, and die, that at last, together with the apostles and all the pious we may obtain the salvation of our souls through the grace of God.

Thus were the foregoing articles of faith adopted and concluded by our united churches in the city of Dort, in Holland, on the 21st day of April, in the year of our Lord 1632, and signed by the following ministers and teachers:

DORT

Isaac Koenig
Johann Cobryssen
Jan Jacobs
Jacuis Terwen
Claes Dirksen
Mels Gysbaerts
Adrian Cornelis

FLISSINGEN

Dillaert Willeborts
Jacob Pennen
Lieven Marymeh

MIDDLEBURG

Bastian Willemsen
Jan Winkelmans

AMSTERDAM

Tobias Goverts
Peter Jansen Mayer
Abram Dirks
David ter Haer
Peter Jan van Zingel

HARLEM

John Doom
Peter Gryspeer
Dirk Wouters Kolenkamp
Peter Joosten

BOMMEL

Wilhelm Jan von Exselt
Gispert Spiering

ROTTERDAM

Balten Centen Schumacher
 Michael Michiels
 Israel von Halmael
 Heinrich Dirkse Apeldoren
 Andreas Lucken

SCHIEDAM

Cornelis Bom
 Lambrecht Paeldink

LEYDEN

Christian de Kopink
 Jan Weyns

BLOCKZYL

Claes Claesson
 Peter Peterson

UTRECHT

Herman Segers
 Jan Heinrich Hochfeld
 Daniel Horens
 Abraham Spronk
 Wilhelm von Brockhuysen

ZIRICZEE

Anton Cornelis
 Peter Jan Zimmerman

CREVELDT

Herman op den Graff
 Wilhelm Kreyne

ZEALAND

Cornelis de Moir
 Isaac Claes

GORCUM

Jacob von Sebrecht
 Jan J. von Kruysen

ARNHEIM

Cornelis Jans
 Dirk Renderson

FROM THE
UPPER COUNTRY

Peter Von Borsel
 Anton Hans

Besides this confession being adopted by so many churches, and signed by their ministers, all the churches in Alsace and Germany afterwards adopted it unanimously. Wherefore it was translated from the Holland into the languages of these countries—into French and German—for the use of the churches there, and for others, of which this may serve as a notice.

The following attestation was signed by the brethren in Alsace, who examined this confession and adopted it as their own:

We, the undersigned, ministers of the word of God, and elders of the church in Alsace, hereby declare and make known, that being assembled this 4th of February in the year of our Lord 1660, at Ohnenheim, on account of the Confession of Faith, which was adopted at the Peace Convention in the city of Dort, on the 21st day of April in the year 1632; and having examined the same, and found it, according to our judgment, in agreement with the word of God, we have entirely adopted it as our own. Which we, in testimony of the truth, and a firm faith, have signed our own hands, as follows:

MINISTERS

MAGENHEIM

John Miller

HEIDELHEIM

John Ringer

BALDENHEIM

Jacob Schebly

ISENHEIM

Henry Schneider

KUNENHEIM

Rudolph Egli

MARKIRCH

Adolph Schmidt

ELDERS

MARKIRCH

Jacob Schmidt
Bertram Habich

OHNENHEIM

Ulrich Husser
Jacob Gochnauer

JEPSENHEIM

John Rudolph Bumen

DUERRSANZENHEIM

Jacob Schneider

KUNENHEIM

Henry Frick

POSTSCRIPT TO THE FOREGOING 18 ARTICLES

From an authentic circular letter of the year 1557, from the Highland to the Netherland churches, it appears that from the Eyfelt to Moravia there were 50 churches, of which some consisted of from 500 to 600 brethren. And that there were about that time, at a conference at Strasburg, about 50 preachers and elders present, who discoursed about matters concerning the welfare of the churches.

These leaders of the non-resistant Christians endeavored earnestly to propagate the truth; so that like a "grain of mustard seed," of small beginning, it grew against all bloody persecution, to the height in which it is to be seen in so many large churches in Germany, Prussia, the Principality of Cleves, &c., and particularly in the United Netherlands.

But finally, alas! there arose disunion amongst them about matters of faith, which so deeply grieved the peaceably disposed amongst them, that they not only thought about means to heal the schism, and restore union, but did also take the matter in hand, and concluded at Cologne, in the year 1591, a laudable peace between the Highland and Netherland churches. Still the schism was not fully healed. Consequently in the years 1628 and 1630, it was deemed necessary at a certain conference, by some lovers of peace to appoint another conference, in order to see whether they could come to an understanding, and the schism be fully healed. Consequently, in order to attain their object in the most effectual manner, there assembled at Dort, from many of the churches in Holland, on the 21st of April, 1632, fifty-one ministers of the word of God, appointed for said purpose; who deemed it advisable that a scriptural confession of faith should be drawn up, to which all parties should adhere, and on which this peace convention and the intended union should be founded and built. Which was then accordingly drawn up, publicly adopted, confirmed, signed, the so much wished for peace obtained, and the light again put on the candlestick, to the honor of the non-resistant Christianity.

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¹ Only the more important materials are listed here. More detailed credit is extended in footnotes throughout the book.

² Examined by Mary L. Bower.

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⁴ The author had access to file, 1911-1917.

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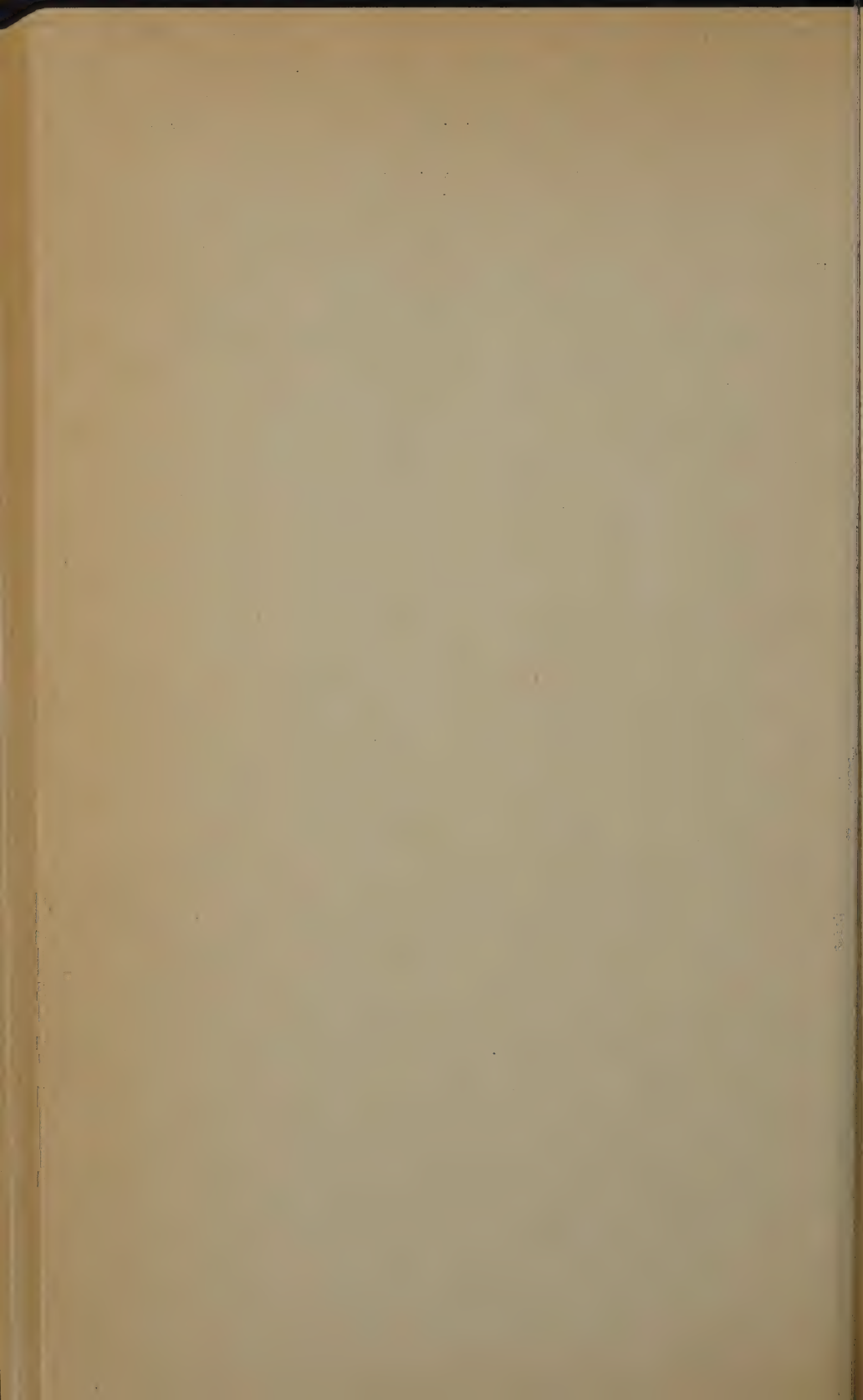
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vs.
Henry H. Borneman, Sr., Deacon, and Isaac H. Borneman, William Stauffer and John B. Bechtel, Trustees of the Mennonite Congregation of Boyertown, Appellees. PAPER BOOK OF APPELLANTS. A. G. Green, Attorney for Appellants. Reading, Pa. Eagle Job Print, 542 Penn Street, 1883.
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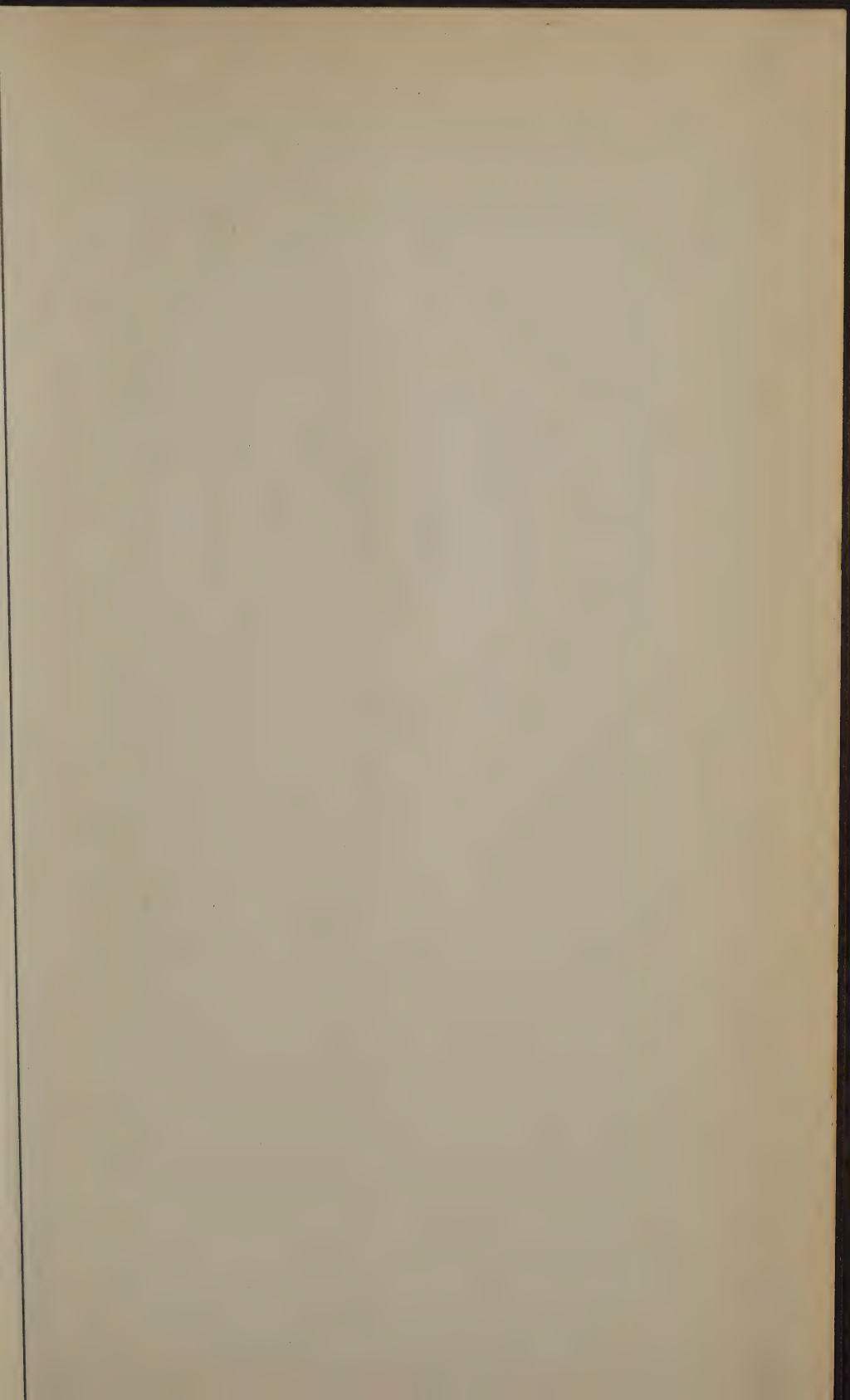
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